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 reserve up your self no longer in the earnest dealing for
 my mother for ye have done it to long & think not that any
 dealing will degrade if his life be lost for then made with
 my dealing wit be that estate & charge ye if ye look for
 the continuance of my future share na pains nor pain-
 nes in this case but reid my letter writ in to William & with
 & conform your self gubillie tot be content with this
 & in this request let me reape the fruit of your
 great credite & share at her now or never. fair well
 James VI

FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER FROM JAMES VI. TO
 ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS (see p. 35).

KING JAMES'S SECRET:

NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ELIZABETH AND
 JAMES VI. RELATING TO THE EXECUTION
 OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, FROM THE
 WARRENDER PAPERS

EDITED BY

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PREFACE

THE new documents here published provide material for an appreciation of the attitude adopted by James VI. of Scotland towards the trial, condemnation, and execution of his mother, Queen Mary. When he first realized that her life was in peril, he instructed Archibald Douglas, his ambassador in England, that Scotland and England could not remain on terms of alliance if she should be put to death, and he sent a special messenger to plead for her life. But his two representatives were also instructed to secure that nothing in her trial or sentence should impair their master's claim to the succession to Elizabeth's throne. These facts have long been known, and the incompatibility of the twofold negotiations, which, as we shall see, was recognized by the ambassadors themselves, has been accepted as sufficient evidence that the Scottish King was not whole-hearted in his subsequent efforts to save his mother's life. That conclusion derives ample confirmation from the documents now

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printed. James believed that he had to choose between Mary's life and the English succession ; the approaching conflict with Spain rendered the existing Scottish alliance a matter of great importance to England, and a threat of opening Scottish harbours to Spanish ships might well restrain Elizabeth from taking her cousin's life ; but, on the other hand, the English statesmen who were most friendly to James were determined that Mary should die in Elizabeth's lifetime (cf. *infra*, pp. 14-15), and he would have alienated them, as well as popular English feeling, by the successful employment of such a menace for such a purpose. He came near to threats, but, at the same time, indicated quite plainly that he would be content with verbal protests.

The new evidence here printed includes the following points :

(1) After learning from Archibald Douglas that he had told the Earl of Leicester that a report that Mary's execution would involve a rupture of the Anglo-Scottish League was unfounded (*infra*, pp. 63, 80), James wrote to Leicester to modify a letter (*infra*, p. 60) in which he had just made a strong plea for his mother. He said that he himself would be

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infatuated if he were to prefer his mother to the claim to the succession (*infra*, pp. 100-102).

This expression may possibly not have meant all that the words taken by themselves imply, but it was followed by the cold assurance that the King's religion moved him to hate his mother's policy, though his honour constrained him to insist for her life. This letter convinced Elizabeth and her ministers that they might put Mary to death without imperilling the Scottish alliance, and James's ambassadors, when they attempted to threaten, were, thereafter, invariably checkmated by confident assertions that the King of Scots was not really in earnest and, once the deed was done, would easily " digest " the injury to his feelings.

(2) When two specially accredited ambassadors, Sir Robert Melville and the Master of Gray, were making a final appeal for Mary's life, they reported that Sir Alexander Stewart, who had been sent with them by James, was informing the English ministers that he had secret instructions from his master, who was really indifferent to Mary's fate, and they insisted that Stewart's assertions had revived an impression, which they had hoped they

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had destroyed, that the Scottish King was not in earnest (*infra*, pp. 158-172). James expressed great indignation with Stewart, but took no steps to punish him when he returned to Edinburgh.

(3) At the last moment, Elizabeth personally seemed to show signs of yielding. Gray and Melville believed that Mary might be saved if the Queen was convinced of the earnestness of her son's pleading, and begged James to disavow Stewart's interpretation of his attitude (*infra*, pp. 158-172). It was with this in his knowledge that James wrote his final letter to Elizabeth (reprinted *infra*, pp. 176-182). He contented himself with an assurance that his accredited ambassadors alone knew his mind, and deliberately refrained from uttering any threat.

(4) In spite of a large amount of evidence that Archibald Douglas had betrayed Mary's cause and had treacherously disassociated himself from his fellow-ambassadors, James continued to employ him for years after Mary's death.

These special points must be interpreted in accordance with the whole impression left on the reader's mind by the letters and by the

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ambassadors' reports of their interviews with Elizabeth and her ministers. The following pages include, besides the documents from the *Warrender Papers*, a selection of other material necessary for an appreciation of the dramatic circumstances in which the fate of Mary, Queen of Scots, was ultimately determined, and of the comparative responsibility borne by the English Queen and her advisers, and by James and his representatives, some of whom were honest and one, at least, was treacherous.

I have called the volume "King James's Secret." James himself always professed to have done his best to save his mother's life; the account which he wished to be received will be found in Camden's history of Elizabeth's reign—the author was believed to have modified his narrative in order to please the King. The secret of the negotiations, in the course of which James refrained from doing his best, was not known to Camden, but it was known to, and was kept by, three Scottish historians in three successive centuries. Archbishop Spottiswoode used these MSS. in the first half of the seventeenth century, but, for obvious reasons, could not suggest in his

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"History of the Church of Scotland" the existence of evidence discreditable to his sovereign or his sovereign's father. Principal Robertson had access to them in the middle of the eighteenth century, and he printed some of them in the Appendices to his "History of Scotland," but he would not tell the tale of the motives that determined the policy of King James. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Patrick Fraser Tytler utilized them in his "History of Scotland," but, although some expressions in his narrative indicate that he had small respect for King James's efforts to save his mother, he also refrained from printing the incriminating documents. The secret has been kept till now.

The *Warrender Papers* are a miscellaneous collection of sixteenth and seventeenth century manuscripts, preserved, without any kind of arrangement, in two bound volumes. Eighteen documents have at some period been extracted from the volumes and have been bound separately. These eighteen, which include three of the series relating to the execution of Queen Mary—communications from the Master of Gray to King James on 12th

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and 21st January, 1586-7, and a letter written by the Earl of Leicester to King James on 23rd January of the same year (*infra*, pp. 145, 169, 172)—were privately printed by Miss Margaret Warrender in a scarce volume entitled "Illustrations of Scottish History" (Edinburgh, 1889).

Of the history of the collection very little is known. That it was used by Archbishop Spottiswoode is proved by endorsements in his handwriting as well as by quotations in his "History." There is no further trace of the MSS. until they were lent, about 1758, to Principal Robertson by Sir Alexander Dick, Bt., of Prestonfield, a distinguished Edinburgh physician, who was described by Dr. Johnson as "the only Scotsman liberal enough not to be angry that I could not find trees, where trees were not." From the Dick family they had passed, possibly by purchase, to Sir George Warrender, Bt., of Lochend, a collector of books and pictures, by the date when Tytler was writing the eighth and ninth volumes of his "History"—the ninth (and last) was published in 1843. After their return by Tytler, the manuscripts were believed to have been destroyed by a fire at Lochend in

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1859, and it was in this belief that Miss Warrender printed, for private circulation, the eighteen detached letters already referred to. The discovery that the two volumes had not perished in the fire which destroyed Lochend—they were found in a cupboard at Bruntfield—led Miss Warrender to arrange for their publication, and I have to express the indebtedness of the editors of the present series to her and to Sir Victor Warrender, Bt., M.P. Miss Warrender has supplied us with the later history of the manuscripts and has allowed us to make use of her own "Illustrations." It is hoped that some other series of documents from this important collection will be printed, under the same editorship, by the Scottish History Society.

I am responsible for the narrative, and Miss Cameron for the transcripts, but Miss Cameron's collaboration has extended to the whole work. We have to offer our thanks to Major Duncan Warrand, the editor of the new series of the Culloden Papers, and to Mr. Henry Paton, H.M. Register House, Edinburgh, for incidental help and to Mr. W. R. Cunningham, formerly of the Public Record Office and now Librarian to the University of Glasgow,

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for a number of transcripts, prepared with a view to a collaboration which the pressure of his new duties has prevented him from undertaking.

ROBERT S. RAIT.

THE UNIVERSITY, GLASGOW.
September, 1927.

NOTE ON THE MANUSCRIPTS

A summary of the contents precedes or follows the text of each document. The spelling in the manuscripts is often bad, and the meaning is sometimes obscure. Explanations have been placed in square brackets; these attempt, where the text is obscure, to convey the meaning of a passage rather than to explain individual words used, occasionally, in an unusual sense, the exact equivalents for which would require elaborate notes. It will help the English reader to remember that qu = w (*e.g.* quhat = what); that "be" is constantly used for "by," and "bot" for "but"; and that "u" "v" and "w" are practically interchangeable.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>C. S. P.</i>	<i>Calendar of Scottish Papers.</i> (State Paper Office.)
<i>Courcelles</i>	<i>Negotiations in Scotland.</i> (Bannatyne Club.)
<i>P. M. G.</i>	<i>Papers of the Master of Gray.</i> (Bannatyne Club.)
<i>Spanish Papers</i>	<i>Calendar of Spanish Papers.</i> (State Paper Office.)

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KING JAMES'S SECRET

CHAPTER I

MOTHER AND SON

ON June 19th, 1566, within a few hours of the birth of her son, Queen Mary gave utterance to a melancholy prophecy about the character of her baby boy and to a cheerful prognostication of his future prosperity. "My lord," she said to her husband, "he is so much your own son that I fear it will be the worse for him hereafter." Then, turning to a young English soldier, the bearer of an illustrious English name, she added: "This is the son who shall first unite the two kingdoms of Scotland and England." The second speech was not less bitter than the first, for it meant the abandonment of the great ambition of the young mother's life—her own succession to the throne of her great-grandfather, Henry VII. The *Warrender Papers* reveal for the first time the full story of the cost at which James VI. of

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Scotland succeeded in fulfilling his mother's prophecy.

When James was eight months old, in February, 1567, his father was murdered. In April, Mary, returning to Edinburgh after a visit to the Prince at Stirling, was captured by Bothwell; in May, she married him; in June, she surrendered to her rebels at Carberry Hill. After the early summer of 1567, she never saw her son again.

James, thus orphaned before he was a year old, lived out a dreary motherless boyhood in Stirling Castle. The Countess of Mar, the guardian of his childhood, was kind to him, though she kept him in great awe. Her son John, the little king's senior by seven years, shared with him such pleasant memories as James's childhood afforded. The name by which young Mar was known, "Jocky o' Sclaittis [Slates]" is the first example of the fondness for nick-names which was characteristic of the Scottish Solomon. Both boys used the slate under the stern rule of George Buchanan, who, as the little James complained, taught him Latin before he could speak Scots, and did not hesitate to apply to a crowned king what a Scottish historian has described as

Mother and Son

"dorsal discipline." James, in later years, rebelled against the political doctrines of his awful pedagogue, denounced "such infamous invectives as Buchanan's or Knox's Chronicles," and described Buchanan as a poet rather than a serious thinker. But he was always proud of having been the pupil of a Scottish scholar of European renown, and he continued to boast of Buchanan's classical attainments after he came into contact with English scholars to whose insular ears the royal pronunciation of Latin sounded barbarous and uncouth. "All the world knows," he said, "that my master, George Buchanan, was a master in that faculty. I follow his pronunciation, both of his Latin and Greek, and am sorry that my people of England do not the like, for certainly their pronunciation utterly fails the grace of these two learned languages." Of Buchanan's assistants in James's tuition, the best known is his successor, Sir Peter Young, of Seaton, who was "gentiller and laith till offend the kyng at ony tyme"; Sir Peter permitted a whipping boy to bear vicarious punishment for the royal transgressor.

Among the books which the boy used were

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some which had belonged to his mother, who, like other royal ladies of the time, had a competent knowledge of Latin. We have no evidence about his early thoughts of her. When he came to write and to publish, he made frequent reference to "that renowned Queen, my mother," and he often praised her tolerance. "In all her letters, whereof I received many, she never made mention of Religion nor laboured to persuade me in it. . . . At her last words, she commanded her Master-household, a Scottish gentleman, my servant and yet alive, she commanded him, I say, to tell me that, although she was of another Religion than that in which I was brought up, yet she would not presse me to change, except my own conscience forced me to it." The Regent Murray he described as "that bastard who unnaturally rebelled and procured the ruine of his own Soverane and Sister," and he told his English subjects his opinion of those who had deposed his mother. "For fifteen years, I was among them but not of them : how they treated that poor lady, my mother, is only too well known." In his book, addressed to his eldest son, the *Basilikon Doron*, he made many edifying remarks about filial

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duty, and warned Prince Henry against the sin of taking the part of his parents' enemies. "It is a thing monstrous to see a man love the childe and hate the Parents. . . . And for conclusion of this point, I may also allege my own experience : For, besides the judgements of God, that with my eyes I have seen fall upon all them that were chief tratours to my Parents, I may justly affirme I never found yet a constant bidding by me in all my straits by any that were of perfite age in my parents' days, but only by such as constantly bode by them : I mean specially them that served the Queene my mother." Standing by the beautiful monument which James erected to Mary in Westminster Abbey, and remembering the gracious tenour of his public references to her, one is tempted to think of him as the model and the type of that filial devotion which, when he was himself a father, he so much admired. Yet the builders of the sepulchres of the prophets were once described as "allowing" the deeds of those who slew them. Did James "allow" the deed of Elizabeth ?

For the disappointments of the early years of his mother's long English imprisonment, James was, of course, in no way responsible.

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But Mary had been eagerly waiting the day when her son should be in a position to intervene in her behalf. She had deeply resented the appointment of Buchanan as his tutor and had attempted, through a French ambassador, to procure his dismissal, and she had nourished wild hopes of placing the boy under the charge of her own kindred in France. She often wrote to him and tried to counteract the hostile influences that surrounded him. As early as 1575, when he was nine, she succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the Countess of Lennox, Darnley's mother, and the two ladies corresponded about "our sweet and peerless jewel in Scotland." Lady Lennox lived in England, but she was in communication with her grandson, whose attitude towards his mother might be influenced by the mother of his murdered father. Soon afterwards a document, purporting to be a death-bed confession of Bothwell, exonerating the Queen from any complicity in the Darnley murder, was brought to Scotland, and Mary heard with delight how her son, then in his eleventh year and a precocious boy, had become aware of its existence and had asked to see it, and how he had expressed his joy that "where-

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as grievous accusations and calumnies have been all along impressed upon me against her Majesty, my mother, this day I have seen a manifest declaration of her innocence." Wild projects for getting James out of the hands of the Regent Morton were among the prisoner's day-dreams of these years; sometimes, she turned to Spain and planned his marriage with the Infanta. She could not, of course, acknowledge her son's regal title; a messenger, with a box of gifts, among them garments embroidered by Mary's own hand, was prevented from having access to the boy because the letter he bore was addressed "To my loving son, James, Prince of Scotland." Mary herself had full confidence in the boy's affection: "Everyone assures me that my son recognises infinitely his duty towards me and that the poor chylde dare not show it in the captivity he is in." James had written an affectionate letter of apology about the gifts, but it was intercepted and retained by Elizabeth.

At last, in 1580, Mary's bitterest enemy, the Regent Morton, fell from power, and James wrote loving letters to his mother, who thought that in time he would be entirely "at her devotion." The execution of Morton in the

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following year confirmed her in this belief, and she proposed an agreement by which mother and son should be associated in the government of Scotland ; her compulsory abdication at Lochleven could not confer the regal power upon James, but she was ready to legalise his authority if he would acknowledge her as the lawful sovereign of Scotland and would unite her name with his in the conduct of affairs. This " Association " project alarmed Elizabeth and her advisers. They knew that James was intriguing with Spain, and that an agreement between his mother and himself would certainly be followed, if the sovereigns had their way, by a Scoto-Spanish alliance. The quarrel between England and Spain was approaching its climax, and Elizabeth could not contemplate with indifference the possibility of the use of Scottish harbours as bases for the Spanish fleet. At no other period in the history of the two nations had the friendship of Scotland been of such importance to England.

The negotiations about the Association were interrupted in 1582 by the Raid of Ruthven, which made James a prisoner for a year. The Raid of Ruthven was a victory of the English faction in Scotland, and James, loathing his

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captors, wrote to his mother : " Be assured that in all the adversities I have sustained for love of you, I have never failed of, nor been turned from, my duty and affection toward you, but, on the contrary, they augment with every trouble that befalls me." James was not yet seventeen. " Always," he continued, " I would show that I recognise my duty towards you as much as any son in the world towards his mother." James escaped from the Ruthven conspirators in 1583, and was stronger than he had been before the Raid. The Association scheme was revived by the Guises, who proposed to invade England, and, with the help of the Roman Catholics in the two countries, to place Mary and James on the throne of both. The English Government was so much alarmed that Walsingham paid a personal visit to Scotland, accompanied by a youth named Robert Carey, who was to be sent on other errands. He failed to improve Anglo-Scottish relations, and in 1584 a Protestant rebellion, at which Elizabeth connived, was suppressed by James and the favourite who governed him for the time—James Stewart, one of the Ochiltree family, whom he had created Earl of Arran.

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The situation, from the English point of view, was retrieved through the ambition of James to succeed to the English throne. This ambition was encouraged by Arran, who recognised that the best chance of its realisation lay in friendship with England, and not in intrigues with Philip II. and the Guises, who could scarcely be sincere in their proposal to place a heretic upon the English throne. In the summer of 1584, Arran, as the representative of the King of Scots, met an English nobleman near Berwick to discuss a League with England. Enticed by the immediate prospect of an English pension and by the hope of receiving Elizabeth's recognition of his claim to succeed her, James soon ceased to feel the chivalrous attraction of the Association project, and complained that, when the Queen of England and he were coming to terms, his mother threw a bone to stick in their teeth. The negotiations were transferred from Berwick to London, and in July, 1585, a League with England was sanctioned by a Convention of the Scottish Estates. In the following year it was ratified and confirmed as an offensive and defensive alliance. James got his pension, and his

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mother's name was not mentioned in the Treaty.

In breaking off communications with Mary, James was guided by the agent who represented him in London in 1584-85. Patrick, Master of Gray (afterwards 6th Lord Gray), had gone to France as a young Scottish Protestant, had made friends with Mary's agent, James Beaton, the exiled Archbishop of Glasgow, and had become cognizant of the secrets of the Marian party. He returned to Scotland in 1583, and his good looks gained him the favour of James, who sent him to England in the following year. Gray had already betrayed Mary's secrets to her son, and he proceeded to betray them to Elizabeth. Mary had, at first, welcomed Gray's presence in England and had trusted both in his honesty and in her son's loyalty. She discovered that she had been betrayed, and wrote to James in an anguish of suspense. He replied coldly that she was a prisoner in a foreign land and therefore incapable of entering into any such Association as had been suggested; he would always acknowledge her as Queen Mother. If his own statement (*infra*, pp. 101-2) is to be trusted, he never wrote to his mother again.

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Gray, in the course of his English visit, not only betrayed Mary ; he made an agreement with Elizabeth which directly contravened his master's instructions, and he destroyed the influence of Arran by causing Elizabeth to distrust him. The favourite had to flee—he returned some years afterwards and met a violent death—and Gray took his place as James's confidential counsellor.

CHAPTER II

THE SUCCESSION

AFTER her son had abandoned her, the conditions of Mary's imprisonment became more severe than ever, and she became involved in the conspiracy of Anthony Babington, partly a genuine Catholic movement, and partly the result of machinations of Government spies. We are not here concerned either with ascertaining Mary's guilt or innocence upon the charge of conspiring against Elizabeth's life, or with speculations as to the ethics of such conspiracy. Mary had fled to England upon Elizabeth's invitation—given when the English queen imagined that her " good sister " was too safely guarded in her island prison at Lochleven ever to avail herself of it—and she had been subjected for many years to a cruel and rigorous captivity, in the course of which Elizabeth had thrice entered into negotiations for the delivery of her cousin to Scottish regents on condition that she should be put to death within a few hours of touching Scottish soil.

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Of much more practical importance than any question of Mary's legal or moral guilt was the circumstance that English public opinion vehemently demanded her execution, even before the Babington conspiracy was formed, and the ferocity of English feeling with regard to her is illustrated not more forcibly by contemporary documents than by the brutal glee of Mr. Froude's brilliant account of her execution. This feeling was carefully nourished by Elizabeth's ministers. Mary's position as the natural successor to the English throne had hampered her diplomacy in the days of her power in Scotland, and it was now the main reason for her death. Elizabeth's advisers were not in any serious alarm about the safety of their mistress from assassination plots, but she was no longer young, and her health was not good. In 1586, she was in her fifty-third year—not old as we count age, but the life of sovereigns was in those days not apt to be prolonged. No English monarch since the Conquest had attained the age of seventy; Elizabeth's father had died at fifty-five, her grandfather at fifty-two, her sister at forty-two, and her brother at sixteen. If her ministers could have known

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that their mistress would reach a longevity unparalleled in the House of Tudor, would outlive all but one of themselves, and would give her impatient cousin in Scotland reason to complain that she seemed likely "to continue as long as sun or moon," they might not have laid such stress upon the immediate necessity for the death of the heiress-presumptive. But they had injured Mary beyond any possibility of reconciliation, and her accession, if it should come about, must mean the destruction of their religion and their cause. It could come about only through a civil war; there was no peaceful means by which Mary could pass from a prison to the throne. It seemed certain that, if Elizabeth should die while Mary lived, there must be a civil war, for a national acquiescence in the claim of any other candidate for the Crown was impossible; and, if the Queen's death were to occur in the near future, a civil war was likely to be accompanied by a Spanish invasion. On the other hand, if Mary were out of the way, the succession of her son, a Protestant, might easily be procured by peaceful means. The English ministers knew that Mary's death was essential for the Scottish succession, and they regarded

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the Scottish succession as the least of the possible evils—those “thick and palpable clouds of darkness” which, more than twenty years later, the translators of the Bible described King James as dispelling, like “the Sun in his strength.”

National alarm for the Queen's safety was encouraged, and probably inspired, by the Government, and, in 1584, while Mary was still dreaming of one kind of “Association,” the word was being used in another sense by a large number of English subjects who pledged themselves “to prosecute to death” any person on behalf of whose claim to the throne an assassination plot should be formed. The formation of the Association led to the enactment of its main provisions by Parliament, but the statute 27 Elizabeth c. 1 authorised the penalty of death only if the person on whose behalf an assassination plot was formed should be proved to be privy to it. The Babington conspiracy came to public knowledge immediately after the final ratification of the Anglo-Scottish League in July, 1586, and there was a general demand that, in accordance with the Act, a Royal Commission, consisting of peers, privy councillors and judges, should be created

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to “examine and give judgment” upon the Queen of Scots, who was accused of complicity with Babington.

King James was too shrewd not to realise that he was a much better candidate for the English throne than his mother, and that her death would facilitate the task of those of Elizabeth's councillors who believed the Scottish succession to be the true solution of the problems which must arise upon a demise of the Crown. From the moment when he learned of the accusation brought against Mary, he showed the deepest anxiety about the effect of her condemnation upon the claim of her son. He had a double claim. His mother was the nearest representative of the issue of Henry VII., and his grandmother, the Countess of Lennox, had stood next to her in the line of succession. Lady Lennox had died in 1578, and her claim had descended to James himself. He thought it possible that he might assert the right which came through his paternal grandmother, the daughter of Margaret Tudor by her second husband, the Earl of Angus, instead of the right which came through his maternal grandfather, the son of Margaret Tudor by her first husband, King

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James IV. But could even this claim survive a possible attainder of his mother's blood? Did the recent statute, which disabled Mary herself, if found guilty of complicity in the Babington Plot, from succeeding to the Crown, also disable any one who was descended from her? He did not, at first, fear for his mother's life, but he assumed that, if she was placed upon her trial, the verdict (just or unjust) would be "guilty," and though the sentence authorised and imposed by law might not be carried out, that circumstance could not remove the significance of the verdict and the condemnation.

CHAPTER III

THE MISSION OF ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS

IN the third week of July, 1586, Walsingham secured evidence, in Mary's own handwriting, that she had been engaged in correspondence with Babington. On August 14th, James sent an agent to England. He does not seem to have known that his mother's life was in danger, and his instructions to his agent (printed in the *Hatfield Papers*, XIII., 298-307) include no reference to the possibility of her being brought to trial. The King's interest lay in an effort to obtain from Elizabeth a recognition of his claim to the succession, and he selected his ambassador for this special purpose. Archibald Douglas, who was sent to England in August as the confidential messenger of his sovereign, had, three months previously, stood his trial on a charge of complicity in the murder of his sovereign's father. He was a member of the Whittinghame family of Douglas and a relative of the Earl of Morton, along with whom he had taken part

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in the murder of Rizzio. After Mary's fall he became a Lord of Session, and the Regent Murray gave him the parsonage of Glasgow, in spite of his being, by his own confession, "not used to pray." He rewarded his benefactors by intriguing with the Queen's party, but after the lapse of some years was restored by Morton to his place in the Court of Session. When Morton was accused of a share in the murder of Darnley, Douglas was included in the accusation and made his escape to England early in 1581. A sentence of forfeiture was passed upon him, in absence, by the Scottish Parliament, in November. By that date he was acting as an English spy in Paris. In England he had come at once into confidential relations with Elizabeth's ministers, who wished to have his advice about the possibility of intervention on Morton's behalf, and they recognised in him a useful tool. In September of the same year, he sent to Walsingham from Paris a report upon negotiations between James and the French Government, and he continued to be employed in the English secret service until the spring of 1586, when he was sent by Elizabeth to Scotland to stand what was generally regarded as a collusive trial.

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Its result was described by the contemporary diarist, David Moyses, as "the filthiest iniquity that was heard of in Scotland," and the verdict was generally attributed to the influence of the Master of Gray and of the English ambassador, Randolph.

Thus rehabilitated, Archibald Douglas went back to London as James's ambassador. He was instructed to express his master's gratitude for what James described as the English Queen's "privy approbation of his claim," to ask for advice about the King's marriage and for her help in maintaining order in Scotland, and to urge her to assist the Dutch Protestants. He was also to discuss these topics, and especially the succession, with Leicester, from whom James, anxious about possible rivals, desired information regarding "the state of the remanent [others] that may pretend titil to that crowne, wyth his opinion of ony pretens that they may found, in case it should pleis Almighty God to call upon her Majesty, and how that mater mycht best be remedyt." Meanwhile, Mary's papers had been seized, and her secretaries arrested and examined. Walsingham employed the Master of Gray "for sounding the King's disposition howe he

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could be content to have the Queen his mother proceeded against for the late facte." The results of the "sounding" are to be traced in Gray's correspondence. On September 2nd, he instructed Douglas to tell Elizabeth "how glad the King is that this matter is come to light." On the 8th, he told him that James thought it could not stand with his honour to consent to the taking of his mother's life, but that he would be "content how strictly she be kept and all hir auld knaifishe servantis heingit." To this expression of his master's views, Gray added his own advice that Douglas must act very warily, "seing necessitie of all honest menis affairs requyris yt [that] sche var out of the vay," and he promised to send further indications of "the Kingis meining."¹

On September 10th, James sent Roger Ashton, or Aston,² an English spy in Scotland,

¹ *Papers of the Master of Gray*, pp. 106-107, 110; *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 170-172.

² Ashton was an Englishman who had been sent to James by his grandmother, the Countess of Lennox, and had become a confidential servant of the King (*Cal. Spanish*, 1580-86, p. 124). In announcing the mission to Douglas, Gray wrote that Ashton "is now become my man again," and that James wished him to be "very seriously" commended to Elizabeth. He added, "He [Aston] has committed an error in causing the King to write to . . . a postscript in his favour, which you must amend the best you can by excuses, for it is somewhat not princely, he being his own servant" (*Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 172). The lacuna in

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to congratulate Elizabeth on the discovery of the conspiracy, and Gray gave Douglas the promised information:—"His meaning is, that he cannot consent her life be taken, and has willed you to declare his opinion that she be put in the Tower, or some other firm manse, and kept from intelligence; her own servants taken from her, and such as be culpable punished rigorously; that hereafter she be not suffered to have any about her, but such as be put to her by the Queen of England. This is all he has commanded me to write to you in that matter." On September 14th, Walsingham wrote to Gray urging him to persuade James to "make no mediacion" for Mary, and on the 29th, Gray assured Douglas that the King "is content the law go fordwart, her life being save, and would gladly wische that all foraine Princes should know how evil she had usit herself towardis the Q. Majestie thair, and that she resaveis favour through her clemencie."

this letter, caused by an injury to the MS., is supplied by Gray's letter of September 9th to Walsingham, which contains the royal postscript referred to (*Papers of the Master of Gray*, p. 108). At an earlier date, Ashton seems to have supplied Leicester with information (Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham*, II., p. 173), but it is clear from Gray's statement that in 1586 he was acting for Walsingham. He continued to be a spy in Scotland for some years.

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Further instructions had been given to Douglas's nephew, Richard.¹

These instructions are not extant, but it is clear that, up to about the end of September, James was not in any alarm as to the safety of his mother's life. The French ambassador in Scotland, du Preau, generally known as M. de Courcelles, writing on October 4th, reported that, in September, James had remarked that Mary "might well drinke the ale and beare which her selfe had brewed," and that when Archibald Douglas indicated that Elizabeth intended to ask James to consent to the proceedings against his mother, James replied to representations made by Scottish nobles against the infamy of allowing her execution, that she had an "evell will towards him," and had "oftene times gone aboute to make a Regente

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 171; *Papers of the Master of Gray*, pp. 110-111. On September 11th, Douglas, in a letter to Walsingham, mentioned an intention of sending his nephew to Scotland (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 10). Richard Douglas, who appears frequently in the correspondence of the time, was not entrusted with the secrets of the letters he carried. "I wrote the last day all in secret by Mr. Richart; the reason I would not tell to himself, but the truth was this, I was surely informed that his letters should have been taken from him by some your good friends; which I would not communicate to himself, for I would have given 500 crowns that it had been done."—Gray to Douglas, September 30th, 1586 (*Hatfield Papers*, XIII., p. 311). The meaning is obscure, and probably Gray was never less to be trusted than when he wrote "the truth was this."

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in Scotland, and to putt him besids the Crowne [dethrone him]." She was, he insisted, "in no danger of her persone, neither could bee in six monthes," and, as for a stricter imprisonment, "it was meete for her to medle with nothings but prayer and servinge of God."¹

The news that Mary was to be tried at Fotheringay reached James towards the end of September, together with a letter from Archibald Douglas in which he reported a conversation with Elizabeth. The English queen had suggested to him that if she "did justice against the mother," she would be doing "nothing else but advance the son." This was true. The Scottish succession would be a much more probable event if James and not Mary were the representative of the direct line of Henry VII. Douglas asserted that he had replied that his master "could not be forgetful of his own honour, whatsoever she was," and that his instructions were "to let her

¹ Courcelles, *Negotiations in Scotland*, pp. 3-9. James had been informed by Elizabeth that his mother had disinherited him and left her crowns or her claims by will to Philip II. There is no evidence of this beyond English statements, and Mary at her execution sent a message to James to say that she had done nothing to prejudice his interests. Cf. J. D. Mackie, "Scotland and the Spanish Armada," in *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. XII.

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Majesty understand what effects good nature would prove in my sovereign notwithstanding any ingratitude that could be alleged on the part of his Majesty's mother." Elizabeth grimly retorted that "if the half of that good nature had been in his mother that I imagine to be in himself, he had not been so soon fatherless," and that a woman who had not spared her husband "was not likely to spare her son."¹

The effect of this information may be traced in a letter from Gray to Douglas written on October 1.² "The King," he says, "is very instant for his mother, and minds to charge me with a commission for that effect." Ten days later, Gray informed Walsingham that "the King is very naturally desirous to save his mother's life, but any other construction placed upon his actions wrongs him."³ The meaning of the "but" in the last quoted sentence is

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, XIII., pp. 308-309.

² *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 178. The editor of the volume notes that "the date is indistinct; it might be 21 or 31; but apparently the first figure is struck out." His decision to date the letter October 1st is confirmed by the circumstance that it contains a statement that "the King is to be shortly at my house," and that on October 11th Gray informed Walsingham that he expected the royal visit "nixt morow" (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 95). James was Gray's guest on October 20th (*C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 103-104).

³ *C. S. P.*, IX., 95.

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explained by the earliest letter in the *Warrender Papers* which relates to Mary's trial. It was written to James by Archibald Douglas on October 16th, in answer to a letter sent by James on September 28th. The King's letter is not extant, but the reply indicates that, when he wrote it, he was thinking mainly of the succession. Douglas says that this letter contained two chief points. The first was Queen Mary's life. As to that, he could get no definite assurance from Elizabeth until Mary's judges had reported upon her guilt or innocence, and they had just gone to Fotheringay when he last saw the Queen, on October 5th. Douglas vehemently discouraged intercession. It was useless to try to secure Protestant support for a plea for Mary's life, because James's Protestant supporters had signed the Bond of Association and had urged that she should be brought to trial. He had tried to enlist the sympathy of some "Papists," and had received Elizabeth's permission to do so, but the only result had been that they had informed their sovereign of his advances, and she had warned him that such negotiations were not in his master's interest. The other point in which James was in-

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terested was the effect which his mother's trial on a charge of treason might have upon the claim which he inherited from her. Douglas assured him that any doubt upon this topic arose from a misreading of the Act for the surety of the Queen's person,¹ and that Elizabeth had kept her promise made to the Master of Gray "concerning your Majesty's title." The only danger lay in the possibility that an "earnest request" for his mother might breed a suspicion that James was himself "assenting to her proceedings," and Douglas suggested that he should, if possible, obtain a declaration of innocency from the English Parliament then sitting, or, at all events, issue one on his own behalf. Elizabeth would have no objection to such a protestation, and had given Douglas leave to "deal therein with such of the parliament as may remain in any doubt of mind."

The letter, which was printed in modern

¹ 27 Eliz. cap. 1 (1584-85). The words on which Douglas founded his assertion that James's claim would not be affected by Mary's trial are probably to be found in Section IV., which provides that the "Association, and everie Article and Sentence therein contained . . . concerning the dishabling of any Person that may . . . pretende any Title to come to the Crowne of this Realme . . . shall be in all Thinges expounded and adjudged according to the true Intent and Meaning of this Acte, and not otherwise *nor against any other Person or Persons.*"

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English in the Appendix to Robertson's "History of Scotland," runs as follows:—

Mr. Archibald Douglas to James VI.

LONDON,
16th October, 1586.

Pleis YOUR MAJESTIE

I ressavit your lettir of the daitt the xxviiij of September the fyift of October whiche was the samyn day that I directed William Murray towardis your hienes. Be suche lettiris as he careitt [carried] and utheris of severall daittis, your Majestie may persave that I had omitted no thing so farr as my trawell [travail] micht reache onto anent the performing of the tua cheiff poyntis contenit in the said lettir, befor the ressait [receipt] thair of, whiche be these presentis I most [must] repeat for answering of the saidis. As to the first, so farre as may concerne the interceding for the Quene your Majesteis mother hir lyffe, I haif divers tymes and in ewerie audience trawellit with this Quene in that mater, speciallie to know what hir full determinatioun micht be in that point, and culd never bring hir to anye forder [further] answer, bot that this proceeding against hir be ordour of justice was no les against hir mynd than against thair will that loved hir [Mary] best. As toward hir lyff, sche could gife no answer thair onto onto suche tyme as the law hathe declared whethir sche wa[s] innocent or gyltie. Heirwithall it was hir pleasour this farr to informe me tha[t] it was ane nombre of the associantis [members of the Association] that ernistlie preissit hir that the law micht proceed against hir, gevand [giving] ressonis that so longe as sche was suffer[ed] to deale in materis [plots] so longe wold never this realme be in quyett, nath[er] hir lyff,

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nather this state in assurance. And in the end thai usit this protestation that if sche wald not in this mater follow thair adwise, that thai suld remayne without all blayme, whatsoewir suld fall owt. Wherupone sche had granted tha[me] libertie to proceid, leaste [lest] suche as had maid the request nicht heirefter ha[if] chargit hir selff with inconvenientis, if onye suld happin.

And be my selff I know this hir speache to be trew becaus boythe Papist and protestant hes behawit thame as it hath beyne hir pleasour to declair, bot upone dywers respectis [for divers reasons], the ane to awoyde suspitioun that uthirwise wa[s] consawit against thame, the uthir upone zeale and cair that thai wilbe knawin to haif for preservatioun of thair soveranis lyff and state, i[n] this perrellous tyme; upone consideratioun wherof I haif beyne constrey[nit] to enter in sum dealing with boythe, wherwith I maid hir Majestie acquayn[t.] The protestantis and suche as in uthir materis wilbe knawin to beir no sm[all?] favour onto your Majesties service hathe prayed that thai may be excused fro[me] onye dealing in the contrare of that whiche be thair othe thai haif wowed and be thair speache to thair soverane requested for, and that befor my cuming in this cuntrey. If thai suld [should] now uthirwise do, it wold produce no bettir effect, bot to mak thame subject to the accusatioun of thair soverane when it suld pleis hir to do it, of thair unconstancie in gevin [giving] counsale, wherbye thay nicht incurre the danger of ill counsallouris and be consequent worthie of punishement. Suche of the Papistis as I did deale with went immediatlie and told hir Majestie what I had spokin to thame, who albeit sche understude the mater of befor, send for me and declarit to me my awin speche that I had utterit to thame,

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willing me for the weill of my Maisteris service to abstene from dealing with suche as war not yit sufficientlie mowed [moved] to think of my Maister as sche did. I crawit lewe [craved leave] of hir Majestie that I nicht informe thame of your Majesties lait behaviour towardis hir, and the state of this realme, wherunto with sum difficultie sche gaiff [gave] hir consent at my late departure from courte, whiche was upone the fyist of this instant, and the day eftir that the lordis of this grand Jure had takin their leiff of hir Majestie to go Northward to Fotheringhame. It was hir pleasour to promise to haif further speache in this mater at the returning of the saidis lordis and to gif full answer according to your Majesteis contentment to the remanent materis that I had proponit in name of your Majestie.

As to the secunde parte, concerning the associatioun and dessire, that the promeis maid to the Maister of Gray concerning your Majesteis titill may be fulfillit, it apperis be the said lettir that the verray poynt whereupone the questioun that may bring your Majesteis titill in doubt hathe not beyne richtlie at the writting of the said letter considderit, whiche I tak to haif procedit for laik of reding of the act of parliament, wherin is fulfillit all the promeis maid be the Quene to the said Master. And no thing may now cause ony doubt to arise against your said titill except that ane opinione suld be consawit [conceived] be these lordis of this parliament that ar so vehement at this tyme against the Quene your Majesteis mother, that your Majestie is, or may be prowin [proven] heireftir assenting to hir proceedingis. And sum that luiffis [loves] your Majesteis service war of that opinione that to [too] ernist request nicht mowe [move] ane ground wherupone suspitioun nicht grow in men so ill affected in that mater,

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whiche I thocht micht be helpit be obtening of ane declaratioun in parliament of your Majesteis innocencie at this tyme. And be ressonne that gude nature and publicc honestie wold constrane yow to intercede for the Quene your mother, whiche wold carye with it selff without anye fordar [anything further] sum suspitioun that micht mowe ill affected men to doubt, in my formar lettiris I humblye crawit of your Majestie that sum learnit men in the lawis micht be mowed to advise with the wordis of the associatione and the mitigatione contenit in the act of parliament, and withall to advise what suspicious effectis your Majesteis requeist micht wirk in these cholerick men at this tyme, and how thair myndis micht be best mowed to ressave ressonne, and upone all these considerationis thai micht haif formed the wordis of ane declaratour of your Majesteis innocencie to be obtenit in this parliament, and failzeing thair of the verray wordis of ane protestatione for the samyn effect that micht best serwe for your Majesteis service and for my better informatioun. Albeit this was my simple opinione I salbe contented to follow onye directione it sall pleis your Majestie to give. I haif alreddie oppinnit the substance heirof to the Quene of this realme who semis not to be offendit heirwith and hathe granted libertie for to deale thairin with suche of the parliament as may remayne in anye doubt of mynd.

This beand the sume of my proceedingis in this mater bessidis the remanent contenit in uthir lettiris of severall daittis I am constranit to lay the hoill oppin [open] befor your Majestie and to humblye pray that full informatioun may be send onto me what fordar to do heirin. In this midde tyme quhill [till] I sall ressave moir ample directione I sall procede, and be doing according to suche directione

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as I haif alreddie ressavit. And so, most gracious soverane, wishing onto your Majestie all happie succes in your effairis, I humblye tak my leiff, from Londone this xvj of October 1586.

Your Majesteis most humble subject and obedient servitour

A. DOUGLAS.

[*Autograph signature* ; Vol. B., f. 324.]

If James were to ask an English Parliament for a certificate of his own innocence of his mother's crimes, he could scarcely intercede for her life, and could certainly make no threat of going to war to avenge her death. The nature of the advice which he received from Douglas was understood in Scotland, for Courcelles, writing on October 31st, says that Mary's enemies were persuading James that his mother's attainder could not prejudice the succession, and that "by opposinge him selfe againste the intended proceedings of England he might by the lawe be disabled to succeed, as partaker of the pretended conspiracye." He adds that Douglas had advised James to send lawyers to England "to consider whether upon opposinge himselfe by mediatione or otherwise, directly or indirectly, againste the executione of his Mother, he should not prejudice his title to the Crowne of Englande."¹

¹ Courcelles, *Negotiations*, pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER IV

THE MISSION OF WILLIAM KEITH

BEFORE Douglas's letter of October 16th reached James, the sneers and expostulations of some of the Scottish nobility had made him resolve to send a special messenger to England. Gray was unwilling to go, and so was the Secretary of State, Sir John Maitland, afterwards Lord Maitland of Thirlestane. The Secretary honestly wished to save Mary's life, but did not wish to be involved in the disgrace of a failure to achieve the object of his embassy. Gray's attitude may be understood from a memorandum prepared in October for the use of Elizabeth's secretary, Davison: "The Master of Gray's letter shows an increase of his discontent. It would be dangerous to lose so profitable an instrument at this time, when the conservation of Scotland is so important."¹ James selected a young man, named William Keith, of Delnies, a member of his Household, who was described by

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 96.

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Courcelles as "a pensionary and creature of the Queene of England."¹ Keith was sent to England on October 20,² and, about the same date, James addressed to Douglas a brief note³ insisting upon an "earnest dealing" for his mother—the phrase is that which Douglas himself had used in attempting to dissuade James from interceding:—

Reserve up your self no longer in the earnist dealing for my mother for ye have done it to long and think not that any dealing will do goode if hir lyfe be lost, for then adeu with my dealing with that estait [England]; and thairfore if ye looke for the contineuance of my favoure spaire na painis nor plainness in this cace but reid my lettir writtin to Villiame Keith and conforme youre self quhollie [wholly] to the contentis thairfor, and in this request lett me reape the fruictis of youre great creditt thaire ather nou or never—fairveill,

JAMES R.

[Vol. A, f. 189.]

The actual instructions given by James to Keith and communicated by him to Douglas are not extant, but we have several descrip-

¹ Courcelles, *Negotiations*, pp. 11, 19.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 103.

³ *Warrender Papers*. The letter is holograph. It was printed by Robertson (App., No. XLIX.) from "an original in the King's hand" in the Cotton Library, Caligula, C. 9. The Warrender MS., which is not quite identical, is probably a draft. It is also printed in *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 120-121.

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tions of them. Gray, who had himself suggested Keith as a messenger, wrote to Douglas, on October 21st, that "his commission is for two causes, the one to deal very earnestly both with the Queen and Councillors for our Sovereign mother's life, the other that his title to that Crown be not prejudged."¹ The nature of these instructions is ample evidence that James, in the middle of October, either did not yet believe that Mary's life was in serious danger, or was then prepared to accept compensation for her blood. The former inference seems to me the more probable. He knew only that she was being tried. Mary faced her judges with serene courage on October 14th, but, by Elizabeth's orders, they delayed giving their decision. If James knew this, as he probably did, by October 20th, he may well have inferred that the English queen did not intend to proceed to extremities. Gray warned the ambassador that James had resented his suggestion that he should refrain

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 183. On October 24th, Roger Ashton, who had returned to Scotland, wrote to Douglas that James "was very glad that judgment was not given at the time of meeting, whereby he believes that the request shall work some good effect with her Majesty; the only thing he craves is her life, all other things to be just as her Majesty pleases, her life only saved." (*Ibid.*, p. 184.)

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from interceding for his mother's life, and had attributed it to an unwillingness, on Douglas's part, to give offence in England. "So I think it good," he wrote, "when he [Keith] comes that you deal as willingly in that matter as he himself, for he will be a captor [censor] of your actions." Gray added that Maitland had made James find fault with Douglas's letter of October 16th, and was urging the King to adopt a firm attitude: "The Secretary has given, in my own presence, plain advice to the King, that if England stand strict at this time they are no more to be trusted, and foreigners to be sought."¹

Gray was becoming very anxious about his own position, for he foresaw that James would insist upon his going to London to plead for Mary's life. He did not wish Mary to live; he had betrayed her upon a former occasion, and a renewal of correspondence between her and her son might reveal unpleasant secrets. He knew that Elizabeth's ministers were determined that Mary should die, and he did not wish to offend them or their mistress. For some time he had been planning to join his friend, Sir Philip Sidney, in Flanders, and he

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 183.

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hoped that such an expedition would release him from his difficulties. On October 25th, he unbosomed his perplexities to Douglas :—

“ I am now put to a strait ; get I not away with diligence [at once], I am to be burdened with a commission that shall be my ‘ wrak ’ [ruin], and shall lose all the Queen of England’s intelligence from this country, so that it harms her Majesty and ‘ wraks ’ me . . . I wrote to you of before that the Secretary had caused the King press me with the negotiation of his title, which I have refused upon reasonable excuses and necessary reasons at this time, for that he was to deal for his mother’s life. But, at the next time, before God, I know not what to say in that matter, for, if I refuse simply, then I lose my Prince’s favour, and he shall think me more addicted to the Queen of England than to him, so that thereby shall be my ‘ wrak ’ . . . I know I am to be charged in that negotiation, as I suppose, shortly, except by my sudden departure I prevent it. . . . *Undique me angustiae premunt.* For, if I deal strictly, to content the Queen there, and not according to the King’s will, then am I ‘ wrakit ’ for ever and prove not a dutiful subject to my Sovereign. Deal I freely,

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according to his mind, then am I assured to offend the Queen there.”

In these circumstances, Gray begged Douglas to persuade Elizabeth or her ministers to send money “ and a letter to the King to hasten me over to Flanders without all delay,” and the request was accompanied by what was either a good resolution or tantamount to a threat. “ If within twenty days I be not gone, by God, I shall be burdened with this charge within ten days thereafter. And, resolutely, if I take it on hand, I must do the duty of a good subject . . . I must be a ‘ Scottis ’ man . . . It lies in their hand to prevent it . . . I protest before God, I shall discharge myself so of my duty, if I be employed, that, whether it ‘ fraime ’ weal or evil, the King my master shall not justly blame me.” He might get out of the difficulty by taking ship for the Low Countries, but he would not “ for ten thousand pounds sterling endure the sea this season.” The letter concludes with an indication that Gray regarded it as possible that James’s intervention might be successful. “ In this matter, touching the Queen the King’s mother’s life I cannot know what to say in it but one thing : I would, if she get favour, that it

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should be by the King's 'moyen' [means] and that we were the instruments."¹

Before Gray wrote, Sidney had died (October 17th), and the Master was not to escape by seeking adventure in Flanders. On October 29th, Mary's judges had given a verdict of "Guilty," but this was probably not known to Gray when he wrote to Douglas on November 6th, deploring the loss of Sidney, "the most sorrowful death that ever I heard of in my time," and acknowledging receipt of a letter from Douglas which has not been preserved. It had come when James was going out hunting and he had read it hurriedly, "and where he found first of the Queen's good mind towards his mother, he was glad, but after, where you say that it shall rather consist in the Lords of Parliament than in the Queen's self, he thinks that very doubtful." James's experience of Scottish Parliaments was not such as to lead him to over-estimate the influence that an English Parliament might bring to bear upon a sovereign. Gray told Douglas that the King wished him to be "instant" for his mother's life, and to report immediately upon Elizabeth's

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 185-188. These letters are modernized by the editor of the *Hatfield Papers*.

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reception of himself and Keith, and he added on his own behalf, "I think it very good ye deal as earnestly in William Keith's negotiation as himself, for it is the King's pleasure, and, seeing I see her life will not be taken, rather win part of the thanks for it than otherwise."¹

Gray's letters, and his good resolutions, impressed the chivalrous nature of Mr. Andrew Lang with a conviction that the friend of Sidney was "a soul not yet lost." But while Gray was suggesting to Douglas that they might make what they could out of Mary's rescue, he was telling Walsingham that he held his old opinion about the best method of dealing with her. On November 6th, he wrote to Walsingham: "The King's majestie, as of before, stil insistis on his mother's lyf . . . I am in that maiter stil of one opinion, and of your ouin [own] opinion, bot it comeis hardly to hand, for the King vil tak it evil, so that I know not what to say forder in it . . . I intend by all meinis possible to chift [shift] any ruinous commission bot I can not refuse my souvereine's comandements, yit I shall use them I hoyp, if I can not escheu, to the contentement of all honest men. Quhat I mein in

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 191-192.

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this, enquyr of his majestei's subject Mr. Archibald Douglas, and by my nixt ye shall know forder of my meining."¹ We know that Gray's old opinion about Mary was that "necessitie of all honest men's affairs requyris yt sche var out of the vay," and his letter to Walsingham is difficult to reconcile with repentance and a determination to be a true "Scottis man." He was, however, giving his real sentiments when he warned both Douglas and Walsingham of the strength of Scottish feeling on the question of Mary's fate, and he expressed himself strongly in a further letter to Douglas, written on November 10. James was being urged to resent Elizabeth's treatment of him and to seek another ally :—

"And by God, I am of the opinion, if franker meining and dealing both be not usit towardis him, he shall do this in effect. Bot till ye shall reseve advertisement ye shall reveil this to no man. I find his Majestie in conscience as yit ryt fast, and he vill be lothe to tak evil impressions ; but ye know quhat tyme doeth vork in all kind of subjects, and chiefly in the myndis of Princes. I would not vryt [write] this plainly in my last, because it

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 149.

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ves [was] sent only by pacquet vithout a sure berar. All men drives at him, first for his Mother, nixt for the maiter of his Title ; for they think be [by] the first to move him, for the dishonour it ville [will] be to him ; nixt for his title, becaus be [by] that they thinke his Majestie shall see vthier they mein evil or veil [weal] towardis him. . . . You shall see that the Guisarchis [Guisards, the Guise party in Scotland] and his Mothers friendis shall tak occasion upon their motives to deal, both directly and indirectly, vithe his Majestie."¹

Henry III. of France was entreating James to intervene, and a letter from John Mowbray, laird of Barnbogle, to Douglas illustrates the vehemence of Scottish feeling. Mowbray deplored that James seemed afraid to lose the friendship of Elizabeth, but reported that the King had said that if "his mother's body were put to trouble and scaith [harm], his Majesty and 5,000 landed gentlemen should seek support at all Princes to revenge his Grace's mother's scaith." He hoped that Douglas understood "if harm shall happen to our mistress the Queen's Majesty, the great wrack that shall come on England and Scotland both,

¹ *Papers of the Master of Gray*, p. 115.

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and that in drawing in of strangers for wrack of both realms."¹ Many of the Scottish nobility and gentry were, in fact, insisting that Mary's death must be a *casus belli*, and war with England would have meant the throwing open of Scottish harbours to Spanish vessels.

Keith reached London on November 5 and asked for an immediate audience for himself and Douglas. They had a preliminary meeting with Elizabeth on November 10th, and she promised them an answer in a day or two. On November 12, Burghley informed Mary's former gaoler, the Earl of Shrewsbury, that Keith had made two requests—to delay proceedings against Mary until James could send some of his Council, and to ensure that "nothing be done to the prejudice of any title to the King." He added that "the latter is granted; the former cannot be without her majesty's peril and the discontent of parliament, where the sentence is already confirmed."² Elizabeth did not want to see the Scottish ambassadors again until her Parliament had taken action and she had made an edifying speech about her desire to avoid the

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, XIII., p. 317. "Strangers" is obviously a reference to Spain. Mowbray was a supporter of Mary.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 152-154.

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shedding of blood. She gave no definite answer to the petition of her Parliament that the sentence should be carried out. "I pray God," she said, "to illuminate my understanding, and, for that I know delay is dangerous, you shall have with all conveniency our resolution. Whatever any prince may merit of their subjects, that do I assuredly promise to perform for requital of your so many deserts."¹ This speech was made on November 12; two days later, Douglas and Keith reminded Davison that they were still waiting for Her Majesty's answer.¹ James and Gray were growing impatient, and Gray wrote to Douglas: "Do my best, I see men shall move the King to brak up with that Queen if sche put hand in his mother's blood."² But Elizabeth was not yet ready. On the 16th, she issued instructions to Lord Buckhurst and Robert Beale to go to Fotheringay to inform Mary of the sentence passed upon her and to bid her prepare for death. Five days later, they carried out their mission.

It was not until November 22 that Douglas sent his report, but two days earlier, he had

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 152-154.

² *Ibid.*, p. 156 (November 16th).

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informed Walsingham that his "sudden suspicious colleague" had taken "ain moyr speady than wyse course in derring of his servand to Scotland." Keith, who wanted to save Mary, had written an account of a second audience with Elizabeth and had urged that "ane solemnit ambassadour may be send hyther wyth speed" to join the French ambassador in a protest. Douglas, who reported to Davison a conversation between his colleague and the French ambassador, Bellièvre, was of opinion that Keith's project "shalbe bettir prevented at home than it can heir, wherein I will do my best." He suggested that Walsingham should see that a promised present of bucks was sent from Elizabeth to James, "to the end that one pleasour may helpe put owte another grief."¹ Keith's letter is not extant, and it is only from Douglas's betrayal of it to Walsingham that we know of its contents. The date of the interview is not recorded, but Bellièvre, an envoy specially sent by Henry III. to plead for Mary's life, arrived in London on the 19th, and it probably took place that day.

Douglas's account, addressed to Gray, begins with an intimation that the two ambassa-

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 160.

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dors realised the incongruity of their two-fold instructions. Keith had undertaken the plea for Mary's life, and Douglas the "mater concerning the titill." The two things were "somewhat repugnant and incompatible to be proponed by one personage." The ambassador saw little hope for Mary's life. Elizabeth had asked them whether she, innocent, or Mary, guilty, should suffer. It was useless to spare Mary and trust to her gratitude, for even if she herself refrained from plotting, her supporters would be none the less convinced that she would reward them if they succeeded in placing her on Elizabeth's throne. The whole of the Papist faction rested their hopes upon Mary and would employ any means to put her in a position to fulfil their aims. After a somewhat obscure summary of Elizabeth's argument, Douglas went on to say that the title was another matter and that Davison had promised that the two Scottish ambassadors should meet some of the Queen's "learned counsell" and make an arrangement satisfactory to James. He then related the recent discussions in the English Parliament, indicated the nature of the mission upon which Buckhurst and Beale had been sent, and con-

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cluded that Mary's life was in "extreame dayngeir."

The letter is here printed for the first time from the original in the *Warrender Papers* :—

Mr. Archibald Douglas to the Master of Gray.

LONDON,
22nd November, 1586.

Pleis your lordship becaus that Mr. William Keyith his Majestis minister hes boythe sufficientlye and well delivered to the quene of this realme all such argumentis as micht mowe [move] hir to the effect wherfore he was directed, and that he is so weill able to set doun boyth his argumentis and answeris ressavit in his secunde audience, I think it not expedient to truble his Majestie with the neydlis repetition thairof, nather your lordship with the reading of manye wordis ; this farre onelie excepted, that it was thocht expedient be [by] ws boythe, befor we come to our audience, that he shuld deliver that mater committed to his charge, and that I shuld insist in the mater concerning the titill as ane mater that was sumwhat repugnant and incompatible to be proponed by one personage, whiche ordour we observed.

His argumentis war dywers [divers] and trewlie able to mowe, bot the some [sum] of the answer collected in few termes did conteyn in substance that this quene wold put it to the judgement of our soverayn whether sche innocent or his mother guyltie shuld suffer the deathe ; and withall lat him onderstand that albeit sche wold spair hir lyff, and that throw that courtesse dealing sche [Mary] wold be hir selff abstayne from fordar dealing in practisis [plots], yit therby this

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quene shuld remane in greitar dangeir than before, becaus the practisaris [plotters] alreddie stirred wpp against hir lywe [life] had proponed onto thame self boythe suretie and rewarde for the cutting of hir of, whiche boythe thay luiked for of the quene our soveranis mother : Yfe hir lyff shuld be preserwed, thair hoipe shuld be contynewed, and be consequence thair dissire increased to obteyn thair expected gayne ; wherof thay wold think thame selffis assured if this quene war cutt of (and the uther quene erected)¹ whose deythe our soveranis mother wold na wise trawell [travail] to rewenge bot be the contrare, as wes alledgit, rewarde the doarris [doers]. And h[ow]beit [even if] she wold not so do, yit the hoill papistis haiffing reposed thair onlie hoipe in hir for the erection of thair religione, had bendit thair fywe sensis and hoill moyen [five senses and whole means] to put hir in the place where sche might fulfill their dissire, not carynge how short space she shuld contynew, yf thair dissire war obteyned.

As to that parte wherin I did insist, I think ordour salbe gevin that be conference satisfacione salbe granted to his Majesti, in what maner I can not as yit declair ; becaus Mr. secretarie Davidsone this morning did schaw me that it was his soveranis pleasour to command that some of her learned counsall shuld be called within one day or towe, wheare boythe the said Mr. William and I shuld be present to sea suche ordour gevin that might be to our soveranis contentment.

The sume of the answer that wes gevin be this quene to the nombre of the parliament that come to hir upone the xij day of this present monethe did conteyne, that sche thankit thame for the cayr thay

¹ Inserted in margin.

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had to preserve hir lyffe, and sche did pray thame to assemble thame selffis togither and to advise upone onye moyen or myddis [means or compromise] wherbye boythe thair lywes nicht be preservewd.

That mater beand ressoned upone be the parliament upone the xvij day was committed to ane smallare nombre of boythe the housses to be digestlie consulted upone, for doing wherof thai ar assembled this xix day, bot I luke for no greit gude to be done be thame in favouris of our soveranis mother.

Because ane speciall freinde of myne send me this discourse wherof I send yow the coppie that he affermed wes penned be the lord thesaurare contening the argumentis that he thinkis shalbe used with the solutionis in forme as may be sene ; I pray yowr lordship that his Majesti may be maid acquaynted thairwithe in secreit maner, and pray that no coppeis may be gevin furthe thair of at the leist for ane short tyme.

Haiffing consideration of the premissis, the contentis heirof, and to the substance of sum instructionis gevin to the lord of Buchherst and to Mr. Beill suscrivit be this quene that ar gone to the quene our soveranis mother, wherewithe I maid Mr. William Keyith acquaynted because it did concerne his negotiation, I can collect no utherwise bot extreame dayngeir of hir lyffe, for safetye wherof we shall leawe no thing undone that shall lye in our power to performe, as from tyme to tyme his Majesti shalbe advertised.

From France it is gevin owt and in prent cummit in this cuntrey that thair is ane abstinence from armes takin for xltie dayis, that in the meane tyme the King of Navarr and quene mother may meitt for treating of fordar peace. The said King haith

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advertised this quene thair of, and that he will come to no conclusion in that mater bot be hir adwise.

The secreit conference of peace mentionat in my last onto yourselff betwixt this realme and the King of Spayne his officiaris doethe contynew as yit without anye [*sic*].

The erle of Leycester, for that the wynde doethe continew as it hathe done this long tyme contrarious for going to Flandres, is loked for to be heir befoir he can ressave advertisement that he is willed be hir Majesti to remane thair. All uthir matteris speciallie dealing with counsallouris and thair answer I must leawe to the sufficiencie of Mr. William Keyithe who, I will assure yow, sparis no trawell to bring the matteris committed to his charge to ane gude ende. Yf materis sall not fall owt as ar loked for ther wilbe no fault in ather of ws. And so I commit your lordship to the protectione of the Almichtie. From Londone this xxij of November 1586

your lordships always to be commandit

A. DOUGLAS.

[*Autograph signature* ; Vol. B, f. 333.]

On the day on which the later part of this letter was written, Douglas and Keith had an interview with Elizabeth's advisers. Burghley, on November 21st, invited them to receive their answer "tomorrow, here at my house in the afternoon. And, to that end, I do heartily require you both to take a homely dinner at my house, where you both shall be very heartily welcome, though not by any plenty of meat, but of good will, and I trust with satisfaction and

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good resol[ution of] your doubt.”¹ The invitation, given in fulfilment of a promise reported in the letter of November 22nd, must have arrived too late to be mentioned in that letter, but Douglas, writing to King James on December 8th (*infra*, p. 77), tells that he and Keith had been present on November 22nd at a “bankett” given by the Lord Treasurer. There was a large party at the “homely dinner,” but the only other guests who were present at the private discussion were Walsingham, the Lord Chief Justice (Sir Christopher Wray), the Chief Baron (Sir Roger Manwood), the Chief Justice of Common Pleas (Sir Edmund Anderson) and the Attorney-General (John Popham), all of whom had been Commissioners for Mary’s trial. The lawyers insisted that in the proceedings against Mary nothing had been done to prejudice James’s claim, and when Douglas and Keith asked for some “special remedy . . . in express terms,” they promised to advise the Queen that this should be done, and Elizabeth herself afterwards undertook “to perform all and whatsoever might be for the surety of your Majesty’s title that it should not be prejudiced.” After

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 196.

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the discussion at Burghley’s house, the ambassadors requested a further conference with the judges, and a declaration alike “of the King our soveranis innocencie” and of the absence of anything in the proceedings against his mother to prejudice his claim. They asked, further, for the ratification of this declaration in Parliament.¹ The answer to their memorial does not appear to have been preserved; its presentation must have weakened their plea for Mary’s life.

Douglas had imagined that the Master of Gray would be able to restrain James from sending the solemn embassy which Keith had suggested.² But James had become really alarmed, and, on November 23rd, Douglas and Keith received letters so urgent that they asked for another interview with Elizabeth.³ James had written a letter to Elizabeth, and the ambassadors delivered it to her on November

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 224. The document is undated, but the contents and a reference to the “judges that did of lait confer with us” makes it clear that the date was soon after November 22nd.

² Gray, writing on November 27th, says that Douglas and Keith were in agreement that a nobleman should be sent. He may have been merely trying to make matters easier for Douglas; if not, Douglas lied to Walsingham when he said that he would try to stop the embassy (*Papers of Master of Gray*, p. 116).

³ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 162.

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26th. It has not been preserved, but the ambassadors reported that it made Elizabeth very angry. She accused James of "boasting" (threatening) her, and she spoke of her commission for Mary's execution as an answer to threats. They asked her to read the menacing passages in the letter, and urged that their purport was only to let her know what was being said in Scotland. At last she promised to receive messengers from James, and she told the ambassadors that "she could not believe that this late dealing, not very prince-like, as she termed it, did come of your Majesty's self, because if your Majesty did rightly consider how you should use her, she could not think that it was your welfare to misuse such, of whom your Majesty might look for so great good as the world thought you might look for to come from her."¹

The nature of the threat sent by James to Elizabeth may be inferred from a letter written by Gray to Douglas on November 23rd. "The King," he says, "nor no man ever believed the matter would have gone so far. . . . The King has commanded me to set down to

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 197. The letter is only a draft, dated November 26th.

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you and his other Ambassador both his intent, deeply touching his mother, as also the opinion of all his people. And first for himself, he thinketh the matter so far toucheth his honour that he cannot but deal more earnestly . . . and if her life be touched, or her blood meddled with, he can no longer remain on good terms with the Queen or estate of that realm. He will find it hard to keep peace with the realm if her life be touched. . . . I never saw all the people so willing to concur in anything as in this same. His borrowings, etc. are to give him a taxation for the employment of an ambassador. They that hated most her prosperity regret her adversity." Gray advised Douglas: "Do your honest duty in all matters according to the obligation you owe to your master's service."¹

James had, therefore, screwed up his courage to the point of suggesting to his representatives that they might threaten to break the league with England if Mary's life was taken. This decision must have been made in the middle of November, for the letters conveying it had reached London on the 20th. Before the end of the month, reports from Douglas and

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 196.

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Keith increased his alarm, and fresh instructions were sent to them. The Secretary, Maitland, wrote to Keith on November 27th, insisting that the continuance of Scottish friendship with England must depend upon Elizabeth's answer to the request for Mary's life¹ :—

Secretary Maitland to William Keith.

HOLYROODHOUSE,
27th November, 1586.

Be your letter sent be this berar (albeit conteining no pleasand subject) his majestie conceaves weill of your earnestnes and fidelitie in your negotiation as alsua of Mr. Archibaldis concurrence and diligence whome ye sa greatlye prays and recommend, I wish the issue correspond to his majesteis opinioun your cair and travell and his sic diligence as ye wryte. His majestie takis this rigorous proceeding against his mother deiplye in hairt as a mater greatlye concerning him bayth in honour and utherwayes. His hienes actions and behaviour utteris plainlie not onlye how far nature prevailles bot alsua how he apprehendis of the sequele of that proces and of what moment he estemis it. Thair is ane ambassade shortlye to be directed wherein wilbe employed ane Earle and twa counsallouris on whais answer will depend the continewance or dissolution of the amitye and good intelligence betwene the princes of this Ile. In the mean season yf forder extremitye

¹ *Warrender Papers*. The letter is a copy, and is unsigned, but Robertson, who printed it (App. XLIX.) was almost certainly right in attributing it to Maitland.

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be used and his majestie sute and requeist disdained, his hienes will think him self dishonored and condemned far by [beyond] his expectatioun and desertes. Ye may perceave his majesteis disposition be his letter to you, quhilk ye shall impert to Mr. Archibald and bayth deall according thairto. I neid not to recommend to you your erand tueching your maister so neir, bayth in weill and honour. As ye and your colligue shall behave your self in this behalf, sua for my awin parte will I interpret your affection to your maister. I am glayd of that I heir of your self, and do fullye credit that ye wryte of Mr. Archibald whais freyndis heir makis great accompt of his professed devotion to the quene besyde the dewtye he owes to the kingis majestie hir sone. Farder I am constrained to remit to nixt occasion, having scarce tyme to scrabill this few lynes (whilkis of thame selves may beir record of my haist). After my vearye hairtye recommendatioun wishing you a prosperous issue of your negotiation I commit you hairtlye in God his holye protectioun. Frome Halyruidhous this xxvij of November 1586.

The people and all estates heir ar sa far moved be the rigorous proceeding against the quene that his majestie and all that hes credit ar importuned and may not go abrod for exclamations aganis thame and imprecationis against the quene of England.

[Vol. A, f. 219.]

On the same day, Gray wrote both to Douglas and to Walsingham. He told Douglas that James had definitely resolved to send a nobleman and two members of the Privy Council to England. James wished Gray him-

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self and the Earl of Bothwell¹ to go, and had so much resented Gray's refusal that the Master had to re-consider his position. "Refuse I," he wrote to Douglas, "the King shall think that I know already quhat shall come of thingis; so that if she die, he shall not feal [fail] to quarrell me for it. Leive she, I shall haue double harme. Refuse I not, but interpryse the voyage, if she die, men shall think I have lent her a hand, so that I shall leive under that slander; and leive she be [by] my travail, I bring a staff to my awin head, or at the least shall have little thanks. Yit if I cannot escheu, rather or I sustein the Kings vrathe, I mynd to accept the commission; and if she die, the uther two shall bear vitness I have done my deutie." Gray was certainly in a difficult position. Douglas had warned him that, if he came to England on this mission, he would be presumed to have turned his coat and become French.² He was known to be in private correspondence with the English Court,

¹ Francis Stewart, or Hepburn, 5th Earl of Bothwell, son of a natural son of James V., and a nephew of Queen Mary's Bothwell, famous as a "stormy petrel" in Scottish politics. According to Courcelles (p. 8), Bothwell had told James that if he allowed Elizabeth to proceed against his mother, he deserved to be hanged.

² *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 199.

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and James would reasonably regard a refusal to go as an acquiescence in what Gray secretly knew to be already determined in England. If he went and failed, suspicion would be almost equally strong; if he succeeded, he would have Mary's old enmity to face. He hesitated about his own conduct, but he had no hesitation about the royal wishes. He hoped that some "middis" or middle course might be devised "to the veil [weal] of both realms," but he urged Douglas and Keith to let Elizabeth, her Secretary, and her Treasurer, know the "simple veritie" about James's attitude, and to procure a postponement of the execution of the sentence.¹

The tone of the letter to Walsingham differed to some extent from that to Douglas. Gray told the English minister of the danger. "I find thingis lykly to fall evil furthe if sume ordour be not takin for a good middis [compromise] in this maiter of my souvraineis mother, for all the evil affectid takis occasion to cry out of this, and so to incense the King that he is a verie diligent suter for hir lyf, and is deliberat nou to

¹ *Papers of the Master of Gray*, pp. 116-118. In another letter (undated) he tells Douglas that James "will no ways keep friendship if his mother's life be touched" (*Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 199).

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send a great ambassador to the Queen your souveraine for that effect." But, in indicating his own contemplated journey, he reverted to his old ambiguous formula: "If I come, I hoyp to do to your contentement and all honest mans."¹

James himself instructed Keith to convey to Elizabeth a strongly worded protest² against Mary's trial and sentence, and an indication of the violence of Scottish feeling; he could not leave his palace without hearing imprecations against the English queen, and he did not dare to restrain the populace. Such an attempt might cost him his throne:—

James VI. to William Keith.

November 27th, 1586.

I perceyve by your last lettre the quene my mother contineweth still in that miserable streyte that the pretended condemnation of that parlament has putt her in. A strange example in deed, and so very rare, as for my part I never redd nor heard of the like practese in such a case. I am sorry that by [beyond] my expec[ta]tion, the quene hath suffred this to procede so farre to my dishonour, and so contrary to her good fame as by subiectes mouth to condemne a soverayne prince discended of all handes of the best blood of Europe. King Henry

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 164.

² *State Papers*, Scotland, Vol. 41. Ink notation f. 497. The document is summarised in *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 169–170.

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the eyghthes reputation was never prejudged in any thing but in the biheading of his bedfellow[s] but yet that tragedy was farre inferior to this yf yt [if it] should proceed as seemeth to be intended; which I can never beleve, synce I know yt the nature of noble princes, at that tyme chefelye to spare, when yt ys most concluded in all mens myndes that they will strike: Alwayes I am presentlye upon the directing of a very honorable ambassade thither for the same purpose in which commission shalbe one man [*i.e.*, Gray] that the quene will well like of, and who both hath and deserveth greate credite at her hand, and therfore faile not to insist with the quene that all farther may be stayed while there arriwall [*i.e.*, that all proceedings be delayed until their arrival], which shalbe as sone as possible they may post thither. This farre I promesse to myselfe wilbe graunted; since I no way merite at that quenes handes such hard using, as to disdayne to heare my overture, and reasons, which when she hath heard, she may way [weigh] as best pleaseth her. Faile not to lett her see all this lettre: and would God she mought see the inward partes of my harte where she should see a greate jewell of honestye toward her, lockt up in a coffer of perplexity, she only having the key which by her good bihaviour in this case may open the same: Gesse ye in what streyte my honour wilbe in, this unhappe [disaster] beyng perfected: synce bifore God I already darre skath [scarce] goo abrode, for crieng oute of the whole people: and what ys spoken by them of the quene of England, yt greves me to heare, and yet darre not fynd faulte with yt except I would dethrone myself, so ys whole Scotland incensed with this matter. As ye love your Masters honor, omitt no earnest diligence in this request. And lett this lettre serve for excuse to the quene my dearest

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sister of my not writing to her at this tyme, in respect of this bearers suddayne departure. Fare well :

JAMES R.

This letter reached London on December 3rd. In spite of the circumstance that James refrained from any reference to his contemplated threat of severing the League, his epistle made, in Douglas's words, "a great stir." Parliament was still urging the Queen to carry out the sentence, and, on November 29th, Keith begged Elizabeth to postpone her decision until he should hear from his master. She swore by the living God that she would rather lose an arm than hurt Mary, but made no definite promise. Next day, the two Scottish agents received instructions from James to discover if there was any hope. On December 3rd, Douglas saw Elizabeth, who asked what guarantee of her own security his master could offer. He begged her to wait for the arrival of ambassadors of higher rank whom King James was about to send. Elizabeth hesitated. She would like to hear what the King of Scots had to say, but she could not promise to delay the execution. At one moment she said that she would never sign the death warrant, and, at another, that she

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would be compelled to sign it. On the way back from Court, the Earl of Leicester, who had just returned from Flanders, offered Douglas a seat in his carriage. As they drove, Leicester remarked that it was King James's real interest to allow Elizabeth to behead his mother. Douglas replied that no one who meddled in the taking away of Mary's life could be a friend to James, but Leicester went on to promise his support for the succession. Then he turned to Douglas and asked point blank about the truth of a report that James was likely to break with England should the sentence be carried out. Douglas answered that the story had no foundation and that James would in no circumstances break the league unless the English should force him to do so. The severance of the league as a reprisal for Mary's death had already been ruled out, and this proviso obviously referred to the succession. Leicester understood it in that sense and went on to promise that England would give no occasion for a rupture and that James would be assured of his "title," if he remained constant in religion and followed good advice.¹

¹ The narrative in this and the following paragraphs is based upon the letters that follow.

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On his return from his drive with Leicester, Douglas found James's vehement letter, and the two Scottish agents sought an interview with Elizabeth next day, December 4th. They were not received until the 6th,¹ but, on the night on which the letter came, Douglas revealed its contents to Walsingham, whose reply, dated December 4th, indicates the character of Douglas's relations both with his colleague and with the English ministers :—

“ Her Majesty doth take most thankfully your premonition given unto her. She doth not like the letter should be suppressed, but that your colleague should proceed to the execution of his charge ; and that you should concur with him in urging the matter according to direction, lest you should be thought otherwise partially affected in the cause contrary to your sovereign's disposition.”²

When they met Elizabeth on the 6th, Keith, knowing that the terms in which James wrote would irritate her, gave her only the sense of the letter, which was addressed to himself (though he was instructed to let her see it). Forewarned by Douglas, she insisted upon

¹ In the interval, a Proclamation (December 4th) was issued confirming the sentence of death upon Queen Mary.

² *Hatfield Papers*, XIII., p. 321.

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seeing the document, and when Keith complied with her request, she, in Keith's words, “ tuik sic ane chafe [fury] as ye wald wonder ; ” in Douglas's words, “ consaived suche passionne as it was ane grit deale of work to ws all and to the erle of Leycester to appease her.” Leicester urged that James had been induced to write the letter by some mischief-maker, and that all that the King wanted was that his mother might be well used. Elizabeth had resolved to avail herself of the opportunity of utilising the letter to test James's determination, and to discover if he was really prepared to act upon the threats at which his ambassadors had hinted. She informed Douglas and Keith that she would not answer in anger and would communicate with them in the morning. The answer, nevertheless, reached them at eleven o'clock that night. It came from Burghley, and it said that the Queen would readily have agreed to delay proceedings until James sent two noblemen from Scotland, “ if you, Mr. Kiethe, had not delivered unto hir Majestie so strange and unseasonable a mesuage as did directly towche hir noble Father, hir self, and all the estatis of her present Parlement.” As it was, she did not see how

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she could honourably consent to give a safe-conduct for the ambassadors. Yet, believing that the message could not have come from the King himself, but from some one who wished either to make trouble or to tempt her to carry out the sentence at once, she would allow James's offers to be sent to Douglas and Keith themselves. At the same time, she could not definitely promise to delay the execution if an emergency should arise.

The original letters in which Keith and Douglas reported these incidents are preserved in the *Warrender Papers*, along with two enclosures—the letter from Burghley and a memorandum sent on Walsingham's behalf to Maitland, presumably to be shown to James. The ambassadors' reports have never been printed; Burghley's letter and the memorandum are to be found in the *Calendar of Scottish Papers*, IX., pp. 184, 187.

Keith's letter, addressed to Secretary Maitland, seems to have been written at different dates. The first section, written before Maitland's letter of November 27th (*supra*, p. 56) had reached him, relates events up to December 3rd; the second gives an account of the stormy interview with Elizabeth. Unfortu-

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nately, part of the letter has been torn away :—

William Keith to my lord
[Secretary Maitland]

8th December, 1586.

My lord I haif hade letteris frome the Master of Gray dyvers tymes, bot nane frome your lordship, quhair of I mervail, saif that I wnderstand your lordship wes at hame quhen I hade my last lettir frome the Master, wreittin to me be his Majesties directioun. The effect of it wes that I sould declair wnto the Qwein and counsale heir quhow that his majestie did tak this matter sa heichlie [seriously] that in cais they wald proceid rigourowlsy againes his mother, he could nocht think they luifit [loved] him self or keip kyndnes with him heireftir. This or rather mair it wes, quhilk I will nocht leif [leave] unspokin in discreit termes, nor nathing his Majestie will command me with sa lang as I leif [live]. The Master writ [in ?] lykwayis that thair wes ane nobilman to be direct heir and ane of his counsale, quhilk trewlie trewlie my lord I am werrie blaith [very blythe] of, for it is wnto his Majesties honnour to lett all the warld sie that he dois quhat possibly he can be any meanis. And for thair passeport, as lykwayis to sie quhat hir Majestie wald do for thair cuming in this matter, his majesties uther embassadour Mr. Archibald Douglas geid [went] wnto hir majestie, quha twiching [touching] that point said sumtyme that scho wald never gif [give] ane warrand for to execuete the Qwein and uther sumtyme [at another time] that scho wald be compellit be hir pepill to suffer the law to straik [strike]. And for his majesties sending of ane nobill man,

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scho wald do na mair for him nor for ws [us *i.e.* Keith and Douglas], being direct from his Majestie and ane that he trustit wnto. This is the thing scho said to my lord Imbassadour quha tauld me it againe. Bot for all this it salbe best your lordship caus haist thame that cumis, and the souner the better. The passeport salbe hade quhow sone it is [as soon as] possibill. Bot befor this lettir caime ane d[ay] I hade bene at hir Majestie with quhome I delt to haif all thingis stayit [delayed]; quhilk I obtenit. Bot then scho schew me quhow [how] thame of the parliament hade desyrit ane warrand of hir to proceid in the uttermaist rigour they could againes our souveraines mother, and quhow scho wald gif thame na ansour. Bot eftirwart scho said to me that it behuiffit hir to [*i.e.* she must] suffer thame proceid, scho trowit, as law and justice wald. Bot I schew hir that my mais[ter] and his freindis sould do quhat ressoun [reason] could be dewysit [devised]. Scho answerit, quhat ressoun could serve hir quhen scho wes deid? I schew hir that my maister wes als cairfull in his offeris for hir Majesties saiftie as any thing ellis. Scho fell to then and spak mony guid wordis of our maister. This wes the effect of that dayis work. I haif sein my Lord erle of Lessister bot in sik [such] ane place quhair I could nocht speik with him at lenth, bot will the morne or nixt day. My Lord imbassadour Mr. Archebald did speik with him, quha fand him in the opinioun of the rest that scho behuiffit to [must] die. Yit my lord thesawrar [Treasurer] quhome I spak yisterday being earnistlie in hand with him desyrit me that I sould offer all sureteis to the quein of this realme that they mycht baith leve [live]. I schew him I hade done sa alrady and wald contenew. This wes mair nor I gate [more than I got] of him sence I came. This parliament is rissin and con-

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tenewit [adjourned] to the xv day of Februar Lykwayis they ar to sett owt ane proclamatioun of the Qwenis convictioun and inhabillatie [inability to succeed to the throne]. Bo[t] we haif bene at my lord thesawrar and secretarie Welschinghame with s[ume?] wther hir majesties laweris and hir advocate at hir Majesties directioun, quhair [we] hade greit ressoning. And trewlie, my Lord imbassadour Mr. Archibald ressonit werrie learnitlie and cairfullie for our maister, swa that I think we salbe satisfet in his Majesties declaratioun, and lykwayis th . . . tytill be nocht prejугit. We ar to sie the proces laid aganis . . . mother. And gif thair be ony thing that may twiche our ma. . . will get it repairit [amended]. At leist swa haif they promiseit. . . All this wes wreittin befor Barnard Lindesay came heir. An . . . I sould mak his Majestie and your lordship foirsene [acquainted] with the proceedingis sen . . . is the vj day of this moneth we hade audience quhair we . . . stay of all thingis till his Majesties Imbassadour came. Bot the . . . we could nocht have, nor ane saifcondeit for thair cuming . . . haif the King to wreit his mynd to hir and na farther. And . . . sevin dayis space to that. Quhairupoun I delyverit his Majesties lettir wreit to me, as his Majestie did comand me. Bot scho tuik sick ane chaif [fury] as ye wald wonder, bot in end sumquhat metigate [pacified], bot na assurance of ony thing till eftir we wes cum to our lugeing. The thesawrar at hir Majesties command send ws ane lettir quhilk your lordship may sie, for I haif send it wnto his Majestie. I wald haif send the coppie of the proclamatioun bot that it wes sett owt bot yistirday, and wnder the greit seill. We haif maid swit [suit] for it wnto hir Majestie. I think we sall have it schortlie. Bot it is maid sumthing nyce. Now, my Lord, I pray your lordship

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mowif [move] his Majestie to haist this imbassadour that sould cum, for thair hardnes in granting the passeport is that they think, Incais his Majestie send sic ane number it will bring the matter in extreme evill termes, or ellis they to obte[ne] his majesties desyre.¹ I wald heirfoir Sir Robert Melvill wer send, for he will nocht be stayit to cum [hindered from coming] as ane messenger, and lett him mak all the speid is possibill. And we sall do all we can be any meanis to haist the saif condeit wnto the erle of Bothwell and the Master of Gray. I say na mair, my Lord, bot according as ye sie we haif tyme prescryvit wnto ws [a limited time allowed us], mak haist. Thair is divers thingis that is in his Majesties lettir quhilk I could nocht sett down in your lordshipis for want of tyme. Bot it is all ane, sen your lordship will gett his Majesties. My Lord, this berar is sa sufficie[nt that ?] ye may trust him as my selff, and I pray yow do. And swa . . . mak ane end eftir my sitting up wretting all the nycht, and now . . . God to bliss yow, and saif yow with mony lang dayis. And gif this . . . with ane fasting stomak baith frome meitt and sleip, juge ye . . . the viij of December 1586.

Commend me hairtlie wnto your lordshipis bed-fallow my lady I pray yow.

Be your Lordshipis all wais att command
W. KEITHE.

[Autograph signature ; Vol. B, f. 322.]

Douglas wrote to James himself. Gray, in his letter of November 27th, had told him that

¹ The sense is that an ambassador should be sent at once. An impression in England that a large embassy would result either in a severance of the League or in a commutation of the sentence explains why so much difficulty is being made about passports.

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the King was not satisfied with his endeavours on Mary's behalf, and he began by defending himself. He believed that Keith was ignorant of his treachery, and he therefore referred James to his colleague as a witness of his zeal and good faith. He then described his negotiations with Elizabeth up to December 3rd, and his interview with Leicester on that day. The conversation was entirely about Mary and the succession, except for a casual reference to a Colonel Stewart, an agent of James in negotiations with the Prince of Parma.¹ The claim of the Earl of Huntingdon to the English throne, of which Leicester spoke to Douglas, was through his mother, Catherine, elder daughter of Henry Pole, Lord Montague, son and heir of Sir Richard Pole by Margaret, daughter and heiress of George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV. As this claim was incompatible with that of the House of Tudor, it implied something like treason, and Leicester might rely upon Elizabeth's approval of a renunciation. In his description of the inter-

¹ For Stewart, cf. Calderwood's *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, IV., pp. 422-448. For the Parma negotiations, cf. J. D. Mackie, "Scotland and the Spanish Armada," in *Scottish Historical Review*, XII., pp. 1-23. The arrival of Stewart in Paris in December, 1586, is recorded in *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 195-196.

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view on December 6th, Douglas innocently remarked that "in the end Mr. William Keith was forced" to let the Queen see James's letter.

Douglas's letter is here printed for the first time from the original autograph in the *Warrender Papers* :—

Mr. Archibald Douglas to James VI.

LONDON,
8th December, 1586.

Pleis YOUR MAJESTIE

be letteris ressavd from the Master of Gray of the dait xxiiij of November, as also be commune report I haif onderstand that sum hard informatioun without anye maner of ground hathe beyn gevin onto your Majestie against me, alledgeing that not onelye had I omitted sum part of my dewetie in your Majesties service, bot also had beyn ane ill instroment in suche materis as micht concerne the saiftie of the quene your mother hir hienes lyff. And trewlie I must publictlye confesse, if I had committed nevyr so small an offence or wilfull error in ather of boyth, that I haif justlie deserved punishement. And if I do not exact [full] diligence in onye mater what soewir, that I shall know doeth concerne your Majestie in honour, as this doeth althought it shuld be with losse of gudis and perrell of lyiff I can not be excused. Albeit I be fullie persuadit that so untrew reportis can not finde place in the mynde of so vertewus ane prince that doeth weill onderstande what is the dewetie of ane borne gentilman, bound so many wise [in so many ways] as having his lyiff from your Majesties gift, yit to the end that my ennemeis

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may be the better able to accuse me if I shalbe found worthye of offence in onye of these materis, I haif takin boldnes to lay oppin befor your Hienes my procedingis in these causis. It is to your Majestie knawin, that this unfortunate and lamentable accident [Mary's sentence] was not knawin to your Majestie the tyme of my departure from that realme, and thairfore that I had no directione thairin except suche as I ressavd in generalitie to interceid as your Majesteis minister thairunto. What I did trawell [travail] thairin may be knawin be frequent adverteismentis gevin of the state of hir cause, whiche I must leave to severall letteris to your Majestie and to the Master of Gray concerning that mater quhilke I think shalbe able to lat my part be knawin, not onlye voyde of ill meaning in that mater but also voyde of all necgligens or sleuthe in making tymous [timely] adverteismentis according to the occurrentis that did fall owt for the tyme in hir hienes cause and your Majesteis service. Eftir William Keyth his comeing hither whose cheifest directione did consist in two poyntis, the one for dealing in your Majesteis mother hir caus in your name, and the uther that your Majesteis titill to this crowne shuld not be prejudgit be onye proceeding against hir—what haythe beyin my part in bayithe theis materis I am contented to leawe to his declaration, who I may assure your Majestie hath dealt no less cairfullye than viselye [wisely] in boythe theis actionis. And I belewe that in the one throw his panefull trawell [*i.e.*, in the matter of the succession through his careful efforts] he shall obtene no less favour to your Majesteis contentment than if that mater had beyn committed to the charge of the wisest and greitest of that hoill realme [Scotland]. As to the uthir [*i.e.*, the plea for Mary's life], be the progresse of the procedingis it may be considdered that the helpe of that mater

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did not consist in the handis of one, nather of sum few, bot in the myndis of ane multitude with whome thair culd be no dealing, that war for diwers respectis everie one m[air ?] fordwart than uthir to have that mater advancit to an ill end, as be ane discourse framed be thame in parliament hous whiche I send to the Master of Gray your Majestie may persawe. The ressonis moving them to it ar thairin set downe, and the feare moving this quene that sche dar not disobey thame may be collected be hir answeris gevin bay[the] to ws speikand [speaking] in your Majesteis name, and to the ambassadour for the King of France, speikand so far as he culd in name of his master. Your hienes may also weill onderstand that that whiche can nocht be obtenit be your Majesteis credite that is greittar at this present with this quene and hoill cuntry than all the credit that onye of your subjectis evir had, and that whiche can not be obtenet be credit of the King of France, whose names was boythe used in this case, can nowise be helped be my small credit whiche doeth depend for the most part from the opinion consawed that your Majestie hathe me in sum reputatione be ressonne that thai sea me impoyed and cairfull of your Majesteis service.¹

¹ The statement is confused. Keith had undertaken the plea for Mary's life and Douglas the negotiations to protect James's claim from being debarred by his mother's trial and sentence. But Douglas, in his anxiety to prevent the sending of a special embassy, urges that Keith can take care of the succession as well as the greatest nobleman, and proceeds to insist upon the impossibility of saving Mary's life. It is not a matter of negotiating with Elizabeth or her ministers. The speeches in Parliament show the national determination to have Mary's life, and Elizabeth had told the French as well as the Scottish ambassadors that she dared not resist the demand. James must not expect Douglas to be able to secure what the Kings of France and Scotland are unable to obtain.

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And if it war in my power to performe the hoill [whole] or onye part thair of, and I shuld not do it, I wold think my selff unworthie to bruik [sustain] the lyiff that your Majestie hathe sparit, whiche shall ewer be readye to spend it in your Majesteis service whensoever occasione shalbe offered. In respect of the premisses I humblye pray your Majestie to examinat onye ill reportis befor thai shalbe trusted.

As to the remanent [rest of] your Majesteis effairis committed to my charge, I crave no fordar bot [further but] that my doingis may be thocht of as thai shall deserwe at my returning to gewe [give] accompt thair of, whiche had beyn or [before] this tyme, if this lamentable accident had not intervenit that hath stayed all uther gude procedingis, whill [till] it may ressave sum finell end, whiche I pray God may be to your Majesteis contentment.

The progresse and continewance thair of doeth stand in theis cheif termes—the quene gaif answer to the demande of the parliament craving violence against your Majesteis mother upone the xij of November, that sche thankit thame for the cair had of her preservatione, and prayed thame to advise if onye moyen [means] culd be founde owt for saiftye of bothe thair lywes [lives], and for the doing herof she appointed the xxij. Upone the xxiiij day thai did repair all to the courte with answer that none culd be dewised. To this it was hir pleasour to use this speache, that sche wald be constrainit to mak thame ane answer answerles [i.e., that she could not give them a definite answer] unto such tyme as sche was fordar adwysed and prayed thame to tak it in gude parte. Upone the said day the erle of Leycester did arywe [arrive] to court at ten of the klok at nycht. Upone the xxvij Monsieur Belleure had audience and in ane long oratione he alledged monye examples of

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seurtye that had happinnd onto Princes throw using of clemencie, with the inconvenientis that had followed rigorous dealing evin amongis princes and equale persounis. To all these this quene maid answer that none of all his examplis culd aggrie with this fact [*i.e.*, afforded a parallel to the circumstances of this case], wherein sche hath used suche clemencie that sche saived the utheris [Mary's] lyiff, when as hir awin subjectis did craue it, and in recompans thairof sche hathe conspirit hir deathe. Bot nevertheles if he quho was ane wise man that did handle materis of state, culd find owt onye moyen how thai nicht both leave [live] sche wald with all her hart inbrace onye suche overture. Upone the xxix day we had audience wheare it was be Mr. William Keyth crawit that all proceding nicht stay [cease] aganis the quene your Majesteis mother unto suche tyme as he nicht ressave answer from your Majestie. This quene gaif answer that it was no les greiff in mynd to hir that onye harme shuld be done against hir, than it was to hir [Mary's] gretast freindis; bot that sche durst not lat it be knawin to hir people that sche beure onye favour to hir, and if onye favour shuld appeir unto thame, borne unto hir [*i.e.*, if Elizabeth seemed to show Mary any favour], it wald be ane occasione that thai wald rather mak ane commotion to pull downe the house wheare sche [Mary] was, than thai wald suffer hir to leawe. And with all sche did sweare be the leving God, that she culd be contented to gif one of hir awin armes to be cut off so that anye moyen culd be found owt that thai nicht boythe leawe in assurance [safety]; and in lyk maner did affirme that thair was never onye mater as yit passed against hir be onye hir dealing [*i.e.*, by Elizabeth's own action] except the granting of ane commissione for hir tryall whiche did grow

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from hir selff [Mary] as beand dissired be hir. As for the parliament house, thai had moved hir to manye materis wherunto sche wald nevir yeilde, and culd not refuse to mak the decreit gevin be the judges to be publissed.

Upone the xxx day we ressaved be your Majesties derectione letteris from the Master of Gray of the dait xxij, commanding that we shuld essay be all meanes to get knowlege, if thair did remane onye dispositione in this quene and counsall to heir [hear] anye compositione or overture for the saweing of hir hienes your Majesteis mother hir lyffe. Befoir I mak answer thairunto I must craue pardon to lat your Majestie understand how we haif procedit in the uther matter of your Majesteis titill, that upone the xxij day of November we war invyted to ane bankett with lord thesaurare wheare dywers [divers] of the counsall wer present, bot none in the efter none enterit in ane privat chambre with ws bot the lord thesaurare, Sir Francis Walsinghame, the lordis cheif justice of England, the chief barone, the cheif justice of the commone place [pleas] with the quenis attorney, who efter that we had dissirit to be maid acquaynted with all such procedingis as had passit against the quene our soueranis mother, did oppin the hoill proceding against her. And everie one of these foirsaidis personis in long speache, that can hardlye be set down in wryte, wald haif persuadit ws that nothing was done in all these processe that nicht wyrk onye hurt or prejudice to your Majesteis titill. Bot we remaned nowise satisfeid with thair affirmatione and schew thame suche ressonis as we culd that onles speciall remeid was providit in expres termes to salve [secure] that mater, that it culd not faill to be in tyme prejudiciall. Thai hard our ressonis with pacience and did promisse to move hir Majestie

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to geve speciall answer thairunto, whiche thai performed, be ressonne in our nixt audience the quene hir selff did promisse to performe all and whatsoevir micht be for the swretie [surety] of your Majesteis titill, that it shuld not [be] prejudgit be onye hir actionis or deid whatsoever during hir tyme, whiche I think shalbe performed in suche forme and maner as the expresse wordis gevin to your trustie minister William Keyithe doeth proposit. But to returne to the answer gevin to the saidis letteris of the dait the xxij. First, I did repair to the courte upone the iij of December whiche was appointit for my audience, I ernistlie requested that it micht be hir Majesteis pleasour to suffer hir self to be persuaded, that it was surast for her to ressave overtures or offeris from uther princes for hir awin swretie [surety] in full satisfacione of the sparing of the said quene hir lyff; and I ernistlie crawit [craved] that it micht be hir pleasour to lat me understand hir full intention heiranent. Sche maid answer to me at the first as sche had done to the Frenche ambassadour that sche wald wis at God [wished to God] that suche overture culd be maid that micht salve boythe thair lywes. In the end sche entered and did ask of me what overture culd be dewised wherbye her lyff micht be maid swre [sure]. I answerit that I durst not presume of my selff to speik of onye suche mater, bot I was assured if my master understude that it micht be hir pleasour to ressave offerris, he wald mak suche overture with the adwise of his wise counsall as I thocht wald satisfie her Majestie, so that in the meane whyle it micht be hir pleasour to spair [delay] onye fordar proceding, whill he micht derect ane speciall ambassadour to hir Majestie for this effect. When sche wald haif maid answer to this part, it was so incertane that I can not tell

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what to writ of it. Bot it did appeir that sche culd haif beyn contentit to haif hard [heard] the overtures, bot sche wold not promisse to delay anye proceeding against hir in the meane tyme. Bot this far at sum tyme sche wald afferme, that no man in the world shuld caus hir to subscriuwe onye warrand for taking away of hir lyff, and sumtymes sche wald afferme that sche belewed necessitie wald force [her] to lat justice proceed, but within one day or two sche wald caus Sir Francis Walsinghame or than [else] the lord thesaurare speik with me upone this mater.

Upone the iij day I returned from courte with my lord of Leycester in his cotche, wheare it was his pleasour to utter long speache to me that it was your Majestes gretast weillfair that this quene shuld do justice against the quene your mother. I assured his lordship that your Majestie culd ressave that persuasione in no gude part, and that ye war so far from belewing onye suche mater that yow wald not think that thai culd be freindis to your Majestie that did medle in the taking away of your motheris lyff.

Dywers uther speeches he did utter that war comfortable toward your Majesteis titill and the gude usage that he wold procure to be done onto your Majestie be this quene during hir lyfytyme, for the whiche I did gewe him most hartlye thankis. Trew it is he doethe governe this courte at this tyme at his pleasour. He did gritlie complane upone colonell Steward that was passed to the Prince of Parma without his knowledge; to whose bedfallow, upone the sight of your lettir, he did afferme to haif schawin grit curtesie. He oppinned [opened] to me in lyk maner suche brwites [reports] as her Majestie had beyn informed of anent the dealing of sum in France that wald persuade that king and state that your Majestie was myndit and your hoill realme to mak defectione

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from the league contracted with this quene and cuntrey in cais onye proceding shuld go fordwart against the quene your Majesteis mother, and askit of me if I beleawed onye suche mater to be trew. I culd mak no uthir answer bot according to my knowlege, that I knew no suche mater to be trew, becaus I knew and was assured that your Majestie had contracted that league of your selff for gude will borne to hir Majestie without the adwise of your nobilitie and against the will of your forane freind[is] and most part of your subjectis, whiche I was assured your Majestie wald nevir break notwithstanding onye report, if the fault shuld nocht be founde in thame selffis that shuld mowe your Majestie to the doing thairof. He gaif many attestationis that no occasione shuld be gevin to move yow therunto, and maid answer that if your Majestie did remane constant in religione and wald use adwise [advice], in despyte of all that wald or durst say in the contrarie yow shuld be weill used be hir Majestie and be assured of your titill to this crowne be suche meanis as your Majestie shuld be advertised of.

As to the erle of Huntingtone his titill, if it wold not offend the quene he shuld caus him presentlie mak publict renunciacione thairof in your Majestes favouris ; bot as evir [however] sche shuld think of it, your Majestie shuld be in expectatione satisfet, becaus tyme serwit not to conclude the particulars in all materis. He did appoint Twisday the vj of this instant to confer at greittar lenthe upone all suche materis as nicht concerne your Majestie. I think it shalbe well done that your Majestie be your nixt lettir shuld geve him thankis for his gude offices maid in your favouris to me, whiche ar verry favorable.

Upone the said iij in the night we ressavd your

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Majesteis lettiris of the dait xxviij of November, whereupone grit sturre [stir] hathe arising heir. We crawled audience upone the fourt day and ressavd answer that hir Majestie culd haif beyn contented to heire ws upone the morne if that day had not bene appointed for the Frenche ambassadour. Upone the vj we had audience wheare we used all the moyen we culd to have moved her Majestie to grant the dissire of your Majesteis lettir, whiche in the end Mr. William Keyth was forced to let be sene onto hir Majestie, whereupone sche consawd [conceived] suche passione as it was ane grit deale of work to ws all and to the erle of Leycester to appease her, who used veray honest speache in your Majesteis name and said he was assured that that lettir had bene procured at the importunate dissire of sum ill affected man that did studie to put inimitie [enmity] and disordour betuixt your Majestie that had no uther mater in mynd bot to request that your mother nicht be weill used, whiche request was honorabill and naturall to your Majestie to perform. Efter sum uther speache passit amongis ws it was hir pleasour to say that sche wald not mak answer in ane angre [in anger], and thairfoir sche wold diffare it till the morning. We did what we culd to move suche counsallouris as wer present to assist our request bot thai refused to medle in that mater ; bot in onye uther that nicht concerne your Majestes weillfair thai did promise all kinde of assistance. We did ressave the answer, whiche we haif thocht meit to be send onto your Majestie be this berare that samyn nicht at allevin of the klok togither with this uther lettir contening the answer of ane lettir that we did send to have moved the lord thesaurare to have qualifeit [modified] this answer gevin be him directed be hir Majestie and counsall.

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Upone the said vj day proclamacione was maid throw this citie publissing the contentis of the decreit gevin be this grand jure [*i.e.*, the sentence passed upon Mary]. Be this narration and the sufficiencie of the berar it may pleis your Majestie be informed of the state of this case wherin this berar can report my behaviour with the mynd I do beir to do your Majestie service agreeable in all and what soewir I shalbe commandit. I know your Majestie to be wise and to haif wise men of your counsell. I pray God that it may be his pleasour to move your hienes to ressaue the best advise for the reparing of suche materis, as be unwise dealing may be brocht in dangeir [*i.e.*, the succession]. I am of that opinione that all materis may yit be helped if ane gude course shalbe takin, wherin we haif communicat our opinione to the sufficiencie of this berar, whome I belewe your Majestie will esteme worthie of credit. And so most gracious prince I humblye tak my leiff. From Londone this viij of December 1586.

Your Majesteis most humble subject and
obedient servitour

A. DOUGLAS.

[*Autograph signature* ; Vol. B, f. 340.]

ENCLOSURES

(a) *Letter from Burghley to Douglas and Keith.*

6th December, 1686.

AFTER my verie hartie commendacons to both your lordships, the Quenes Majestie having considered further of the request yowe made this daie in the Kinge your Soveraines name, for a safe conduit to be grawnted for certaine noblemen which he is disposed to send hither unto hir Majestie to

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make sum ouvertures, thearebie to move hir Majestie to staie from anie further proceadinge against the Quene his Mother, and that in the meane time she would for sum fewe daies staie the execution, hath willed me, after conference had with sum other of hir Counsell and mee uppon this matter with the circumstancis of your messuage, to lett you understand, that if you, Mr. Kiethe, had not delivered unto hir Majestie soe strange and unseasonable a messuage, as did directlie towche hir noble Father, hir self, and all the estatis of hir present Parlement, she would not have misliked nor denied the Kinges request (thowgh nothings can be at this instant more dangerous unto hir self than delaie), but nowe as the case standeth and as you have proceeded with hir in this strange manner, noe wise looked for by hir from the Kinge, she seeth not howe she can with hir honour at this time assent to yeld to the safe conduct by you required, with the staie [*delay*] also of the further proceading in the meane time. And yet for that hir Majestie imagineth that the messuage in this strange sort delivered by you should not growe directlie from the Kinge himself, but rather by meanes of thos that either would be glad to interrupt the good amitie begonne betwene their Majesties and their two Realmes, as she hath sum cawse to dowbt of sum not well affected, or else percase [*possibly*] uppon a conceipt of sum other [*i.e.*, a design of some others], that by such a request in a menacing sort (as this semeth to bee) hir Majestie might be thearebie provoked to use the more speed to hasten the executioun, therefore she is content that if anie such ouvertures as was intended shall be sent from the Kinge unto you, his Ministers heare residing, (as the same maie with more speed be expedited, soe it be with in sum convenient time as

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with in tenne or twelve daies) she will be contented to geve eare unto the same. But yet hir Majesty saith that she cannot directlie promise to staie in case she shall be in the meane time forced, thorough the waight importing so nearelie as it doth both hir self for hir lief, and hir whole state of hir realme, to proceade to the sayd executioun. Thus I did conceive hir Majesties speeches for awnswere of your manner of proceeding this daie, which I doe by hir commaundment send unto you by this my letter, being for my particuler [*i.e.*, myself] verie sorie to perceive such occasion geven at this time by soe strange and hard dealing, whan such requestes owght to have been followed and sowght with all curtesie, kindnes, and frendlie argumentes of perswasion. But I feare much (as hir Majestie semeth to dowbt) that theare are some not soe well affected to the noreshing [nourishing] of the mutuall love betwixt theare Majesties, as weare requisite and proffitable for them both and their cuntries. God amend them and reforme their errours. From Rychmont the 6 of Decemb. 1586.

Your Lordships assured loving frend

W. BURGHLEY.

[*Autograph signature* ; Vol. B, f. 329.]

(b) *Memoranda prepared for Walsingham, and sent, presumably in his name, to Secretary Maitland, 8th December, 1586.*

ANE memoriall of certene heades to be communicated to the lorde Secretarie of Scotland.

That the not answearing of his lettres sent unto me above a fyve monethes past proceided, not of anie misconcept I had of him, but for that I could

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not yealde such ane answeare to the same, as might fall out either to my desyre or his contentment in respect of some crosse dealing here under hand.

That I praye him to thincke that I am not one that is lightlie drawen uppon reportes growing out of faction to condempe a man reputed so wise and relligious as he is.

That by longe experience I have found that where faction through envie raigneth, as fewe or no courtes are free frome the same, how harde it is for a man to escape free unslandered.

That I therefore doe earnestlye desyre him that it maye stand for a constant and grounded rule betwene ws not to condempne eache other uppon ane reporte untill the same shalbe reciprocallye answered, wherebye there may be a profitable intelligence continewd betwene ws for the publicke benefitt of bothe the realmes, and the princes our soveraignes.

To lett him knowe that all wise and relligious men here do wonder greatlye that for the present action in hand here, to see those that be bothe wise and relligious in that realme, so earnest in preassing the King to importune her majestie so greatlie in this cause of his mother, seeing all the papistes in Europe that affect the change of relligion in bothe realmes doe build altogether there hoipe of the sayd change uppon the person of the said Queene, who sheweth her self so passionatte in poynt of relligion as she hath transferred her pretended right to bothe the crownes unto the King of Spayne, in case the King her sone shall persevere in his relligion.

That the late message sent by the King delyvered by Mr. Keith had like to have bredd a dangerous alteration here of the affection borne to the amitye of that crowne, had not men well affected interposed their creditt for the stay thereof.

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That althoughe it be supposed by some here that the lorde Secretarie was the penner of the said message, yett for myn owne parte, knowing him to be a man of judgement and wisdom, I am persuaded it was donne without his advise.

Lastlie to lett him understande that there are some here that for their particulare [*i.e.*, for their own interests] could be content the present amitie betwene ws were interrupted, and that the antient hatred betwene the twoe nations were revyved, which might be more profitable for the common enemies then for ether of our Soveraignes, and therefore, ought to move all well affected servantes and counsellours to looke carefullie that all causes of offence may be avoyded.

8 December, 1586 [*Unsigned*; Vol. B, f. 334.]

Along with these documents, Keith sent a private communication to Maitland, whose letter (*supra*, p. 56) he had received. An unsigned and undated copy, unfortunately in a bad state of preservation, is here printed from the *Warrender Papers*; the contents sufficiently indicate the identity of the writer. Keith may not have known of the specific acts of treachery committed by Douglas, but he described him as a serpent in a man's likeness, and insisted that he was not in earnest about Mary's life. The MS., as it now exists, does not mention Douglas by name, but the person alluded to had told the writer that the Master

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of Gray had forbidden him to come in Scotland if this matter "gang wrang." Gray, on November 27th, had suggested to Douglas the possibility of his finding himself "a banisit man," and Douglas complained to Gray about the phrase, for Gray, on his way to London, wrote defending himself on the ground that he had merely repeated what James had said and that they were both in the same box.¹ After warning Maitland against Douglas, Keith expressed some doubt about the good faith of the French ambassador, Bellièvre, who had been sent specially to plead for Mary, and the contemporary *Calendar of Spanish Papers* shows that similar doubts were entertained in Spain. He then insisted on the extremity of the danger to Mary and on the necessity of sending the new mission within the twelve days allowed by Elizabeth, and asked to be informed what action James intended to take in the event of a refusal to comply with his request for her life. He told Maitland that Gray was suspected at the English Court of having gone over

¹ *Papers of the Master of Gray*, pp. 117, 125; Murdin's *State Papers*, p. 575.

² The letter is endorsed by a seventeenth century hand (probably Spottiswoode) as from Sir Robert Melville, but the reference to the twelve days' limit is alone sufficient to show that it was written before Melville's arrival.

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to the French party, and that he was blamed for the tone of James's letter. Gray knew of these suspicions, for Douglas had given him a hint of them, and he wrote to Walsingham on December 13th denying that he had been engaged in negotiations with France, and on December 25th (*cf. infra*, p. 127) repudiating responsibility for James's letter.¹ Gray asked that Leicester might see his exculpation, and Keith mentions that Leicester was specially bitter against him. Gray had enlisted Scotsmen to fight in Flanders, and, in his letters, written after Sir Philip Sidney's death, he begged often and earnestly that they should be well treated. Leicester told Keith that Gray had kept back the pay of these men, but Keith assured Maitland that this charge was not true.

"Poyeit," mentioned early in the letter, may be Sir Amyas Poulet, or Paulet, Queen Mary's gaoler, and "Andrax," whom Gray is accused of inviting from France in order that the French may have James "at their devotion," may be Monsieur d'Entragues, whose name was corrupted into Andragas. He was an agent of the Duke of Guise, and Gray was accused of sending his servant, Thomas Tyrie,

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 191, 201.

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to him in the end of 1586 to renew negotiations with Guise. In a letter to Walsingham he denied the accusation.¹

The spelling and handwriting of the document are very bad and it has been seriously damaged in places :—

William Keith to Maitland,

[*c. 9th December, 1586.*]

To my werrie guid lord, My Lord Secretarie
Vice chanslair

MY LORD, I am far obleist to yowr lordship that wret me sik ane lettir nou at this tym that I wald fainest haw [have] knawin quhat his majeste thocht of me and of the personage [I ?] wrett of to his majeste, for in gud faith I . . . the trewth and yit hes meikill keeping be . . . that I am ewin pancing [conjecturing] quhat Poyeit s[all ?] compaill. All yowr lordship can do weill I feir sa . . . lattin. I wat nocht quhat ye will do in . . . bot he [presumably Douglas] is so fleit [frightened] that he watis nocht quhat s . . . [side ?] to rin him on. He sayis he will speik frei[lie] to the quene and cownsell and he will go to [the ?] Franche imbastour and speik for nein [none] in Ingland, bot let sei giff [*i.e.*, wait and see if] he dar do any of tham for his lyff, or at lest for taining [losing] all he hesse [has]; for he sayis to me the master of Gray forbidis him to cowm in Skotland giff this maitter gang wrang; and quhat cairis he that, if thay haw [have] nocht, he sais, left him any thing that he cairis for thair [*i.e.*, what

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 191.

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cares he for that if, as he says, his enemies have left him nothing to hope for in Scotland]. Bot I tald him, giff that he tinnit [lost] Skotland he was able to tyin [lose] Ingland, for this was ane ald quene and my maister was yong. He said than, he wald do for his maister all that was possible so lang as the lyff was in his majesteis hand sparit. Ye vill nocht beleiff, my lord, quhat guid I haw of him, and sais to his companyonis I am the baist [best] simple gentill man thatt may be [*i.e.*, Douglas speaks of Keith as a simpleton]; bot, be God, we ar nocht beith serpera [? serpents]. I am simpill, it is trew, bot he is ane serpaint in ane manis lyknes and cairis no mair for this maitter . . . all Skotland no I do for my man; bot that [? I wrait] nocht to his majeste was that my lettir to yowr lordship will s[erve] weill anewche. I beleiff in this sowgeett [subject] . . . yowr lordship can discowrce, and gif [? if] yow ane g . . . ye haw [have] her lairge anewche, bott I wat nocht gif . . . gud. This Franche imbastowr that cam last I feir him in this maittir albeit I haw gottin many fair wordis of him, for I onderstand he is mair ernist to seik at the quenis hand quhow to sowppresse [suppress] the kyng of Spanis gretnes be his maisteris moyan [means] and hiris [hers] nor [than] any other thing. And that thay think heir he wald be content to ower sie [overlook] this . . . sawe [save] that he man [must] do alytill for his honowris cawis this heir [sic], bot the end will try all; and quhow so ewre [howsoever] it be . . . as I am heir my maistiris pairt salbe in ane honorable and honest . . . Bot now, my lord, quha ewer maikis [makes] yow beleiff thatt the quene is nocht in extremattie in taiking of owr sowfarranis motheris lyf, trow [believe] itt nocht, for I see nothing bot hir lyf wilbe tein [taken]; and heirfor, my lord, as ewer ye will do any thing for my

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request, moiff [move] his majeste that ane may cown away [one may come away] weill in stroktitt [instructed] ather to satisfei hir majeste heir with resounis or els taik sik ressonis as sche will gif heir to be send onto owr maistir. Bot this man [the new ambassador] [must] byd no delay, for I haw no forther tym grantitt nor twalf dayis as ye may pa[rceive ?] be the cecritteris [secretary's] lettir and quhat condissionis . . . bot ye may cawis [cause] derekt [send] quham ye will for all that, swa thair nombair exceid nocht twalff [twelve], for gif thay be many thay will nocht gett ane passport nor yitt can thay cown soin [soon] anewche. I pray yow, my lord, haw cair on this for my cawis, and let me sei ye remembair on my weill, as I grant ye haw doin of befoir . . . mair my lord, I pray yow adwarteise me be yowr awin hand priwaly with the fowrst [first] occasion can offer quhat his mageste thinkis to do inkeice [in case] he be reffoist [refused] in his suit twitching his mother; and be this I sall ken quhow to behaif my self, and in sindrei other respectis it will do me gret gud. The rest off thir porpossis [topics] I leif to the berair, bot this point is only knawin to my self and I wald nocht that any sowld ken so far, bot only that yowr lordship wald maik me that meikill for sein [fore-informed] be yowr awin hand. The master of Gray is extrem ewill thought of heir beith be the quene and cownsell. Thay speik planly that he is in ane Franche cownce [a French course] and that he hes wrettin to France for Andrax to cown in Skotland and thay sall haw the kying att thair dewocion. [The] quene speikis the mest evill thatt may be off him. [I think] sche wald be at the wining of him agane f[or] . . . tald me sche was porpost [purposed] to haw wrettin [to him]; yit the erll off Lassistir [Leicester] sayis he keippitt all . . . silwir that sowld haw payitt the men

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of weir; [bo]t that I knaw the contrair of. Alway he [Leicester] speikis no gud off him nor nein [none] of tham and weith [*sic*] him for the hard lettir the kyng wrett to me, and ye will nocht want yowr pairtt; bot it is nocht so hard againe yow as quhan I cam fowrst [*i.e.*, Maitland is being attacked in England but not so fiercely as when Keith arrived]. I will wret no mair off this now, bot any thing I haw forzett [forgot] this berair will maik yow acquentt with it. And I assuris yow my lord ye ar . . . far behaldin to him as I can nocht tell in short termis . . . will haw experiance o[f]. [*Holograph*: Vol. B, f. 323.]

Though Burghley's letter (*supra*, p. 82) reached them late at night on December 6th, Keith and Douglas replied on the same date. James's offending letter proved, they said, that the King of Scots was "in some degree forced by the acclamations of his subjects." They asked for a safe conduct for the new mission, and hoped that those who were entrusted by James with the negotiations might be allowed to come to London for "opening up all such griefs, as the concealing might breed inconvenient." They also wrote to Walsingham to ask for a "commission for post horses" for the speedy dispatch of a bearer of the important communications which they had to send to their master.¹ The messenger whom they sent

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 184-185.

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was James Hudson, a dependant of the Master of Gray, who had brought letters from Scotland about November 23rd.¹

Walsingham replied to both letters. He gave a more courteous reason than Burghley for the refusal to permit the mission of a nobleman, but he insisted upon the twelve days limit for the coming of "some gentleman." The original letter, with an autograph signature, is printed, for the first time, from the *Warrender Papers* :—

Walsingham to the Ambassadors of Scotland.

RICHMOND,
7th December, 1586.

AFTER my harty commendations to your lordships, my Lord Treasurer being fallen sicke of the gowte desired me to communicate unto hir majestie your late letters written unto him, which hir majestie having perused hath willed me to signifie unto you, that forasmuch as she conceyveth that persons of that qualitie which the King your sovereigne intendeth to sende hither unto hir to make some overture for the stay of proceeding against the Queene his mother can not be here within the tyme limited of tenne or xij dayes, she seeth just cause (as also for the reasons conteyned in the letters written unto your lordships by my Lord Treasurer) to continue hir former resolution in stayeng [declining] to yeeld the saffe conduct by your lordships desired.

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 197; *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 162, 189.

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And yet can be content if the kinge your Sovereigne shall so like of it, that he should send some gentleman hither unto hir (who comyng with no great trayne may repaire hither within the tyme before specefied) to acquainte hir with such ouvertures as the saied kinge your Sovereigne pretendeth he hath to make unto hir majestie for the stay of the saied proceeding. Hir pleasure is also that I should further signifie unto you that there may fall out some such mater of that weight and consequence in respect of the perill both of hir self and of hir estate that may move hir highnes to hasten the saied proceeding within the tyme before specefied, which if it should so happen, she doth not looke that the same shalbe imputed to hir as a breach of promise though she hopeth there will fall out no such occasion. And so having imparted unto you hir majesties pleasure in this behalf I committ your lordships to the protection of th' Almighty. From the Court at Richmonde the vijth of December 1586.

Your lordships very loving frende

FRA : WALSYNGHAM.

[Vol. A, f. 207.]

CHAPTER V

THE EMBASSY OF GRAY AND MELVILLE

WHILE the letters of Keith and Douglas were on their way to Scotland, Walsingham received information from Sir Henry Widdrington, the Deputy at Berwick, that James had summoned his nobility to a Council "which is to conclude with a general consent that if the Queen of Scots be put to death the King [will] give up the peace with her majesty and [go to] war with England." Widdrington also reported that the Earl Bothwell, the Master of Gray, Sir Robert Melville, Mr. John Sharpe, Mr. Lindsey, preacher, and Mr. George Young, "with divers other gentlemen of credit" would come, after the meeting, as "ambassadors to her majesty."¹ The record of the Convention has not been preserved.² It was probably held after James

¹ C. S. P., IX., p. 185.

² For the Convention, cf. *Calderwood*, IV., p. 605 (the passage confirms Widdrington's view of the possibility of war); *Moyses' Memoirs* (edn. of 1755, p. 112); the *Historie of King James the Sixt*, p. 224; and the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (1st ser.), IV., p. 129.

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knew that Elizabeth would not allow a nobleman to be sent. The Master of Gray, writing before he learned of this restriction, says that, being compelled to go, he had made it a condition that two of "the Queenis [Mary's] especiall frends" should accompany him, and that he had chosen Bothwell and Sir Robert Melville: "if the Earle Bothwell be as ready as Sir Robert and I, we shall be gon within eight daies."¹ In anticipation of his journey, he wrote to Walsingham on December 13th, denying allegations made against him. He had never advised James to grant religious toleration, he had never advocated the dissolution of the League with England, which owed its existence to himself. His servant, Thomas Tyrie (*cf. supra*, p. 88), had gone to France for the purpose of "selling his place in the King's guard," and not with messages to the Duke of Guise. He had never urged the sending of an embassy, "touching the matter of his majesty's

¹ *Papers of the Master of Gray*, p. 119. Sir Robert Melville, of Murdocairney, was a brother of Sir James Melville of Hallhill whose *Memoirs* give a fascinating picture of Mary and Elizabeth twenty years earlier. Sir Robert Melville held the post of Keeper of the Palace of Linlithgow and was a partisan of Mary, in whose army he fought at Langside in 1568. James had made him a Privy Councillor in 1583. George Young was the Clerk of the Privy Council.

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mother;" he had tried to restrain James as long as he durst; he had consented to go to England to checkmate enemies who had proposed his being sent in order that he might ruin himself by declining. He begged Walsingham, if there was no hope for Mary, to stop him on his way to London or send him home again immediately after his arrival.¹ An advocate who began a mission in this manner was not likely to succeed in his plea. Gray, before leaving Edinburgh, and before learning what had passed between Elizabeth and Keith and Douglas, asked Walsingham to save him from the consequences of failure by doing James the additional discourtesy of refusing to hear what his representatives had to say.¹

The ambassadors' unwelcome budget reached Holyrood on December 14th. James must have recognised that the moment had come to decide whether he really meant to save his mother or not. Douglas had told Leicester that nothing would make his master break the League with England, and James knew that if he did not contradict the impression thus given, his mother's life would almost certainly be sacrificed. On the other hand,

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 191.

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the letters of Douglas and Keith suggested that if he threatened to make Mary's execution a *casus belli* the result might be disastrous to his own claim to the English succession. In this unhappy state of mind he wrote two letters on December 15th. To Elizabeth he addressed an appeal for delay until the Master of Gray should reach London, but made no allusion to his own probable action in the event of the English Queen's carrying out the sentence. Some words in the letter refer to himself as Elizabeth's "most honest and steadfast friend," and to his determination to deserve that description, but this expression could not be regarded as committing him to anything. The letter is here printed, for the first time, from a copy in the *Warrender Papers* :—

James VI. to Elizabeth.

HOLYROODHOUSE,
15th December, 1586.

I AM from my hart sory Madame and dearest suster that ye sould so farre have misconstrued my letter written to Williame Keith, as to have thocht I meanit thairby to threaten yow and your estatis, quhair as be the contraire my meanyng was onelie (as God knawis) to informe yow what brute thir [report these] procedingis made to be spred through all this contray, quhar throught whole Scotland is in dede

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so incensed as the bearer heirof, your owne countrey man, can informe yow what his owne eares and eyes have hard and seene heirin. As for me, I knowe well aneugh, how hardlie ye are preassed by the objecting the perrell of your owne lyffe unto yow [*i.e.*, by those who urge that your own life is in danger], and thairfore I never blamed your selff directlie of thir procedingis. I pray yow then, Madame, to accompt me your most honest and steadfast freind, since I never did nor shall deserve any uther opinioun to be conceived by yow of me. Now, Madame, I must hartly pray yow for my saike to continewe [delay] any proceeding against my mother, whill [till] my ouvertures be hard, which the Master of Gray shall bring unto yow, who I promise to yow upoun my honour sall part from hence on Setterday next, all excuses set asyde; and thairfore I also pray yow that your pasport for him and another gentilman may meit him by the way. This farre I assure my selff ye will do for my sake, as I sall ever preas [press] to deserve it at your handis; and thus not omitting to thank yow for the delay already granted, I commit yow, Madame, and dearest suster to the holy protection of the most Heich. From Halyruidhous the xv day of December 1586.

Your most loving and affectionat brother and
cousing

JAMES R.
[Vol. B, f. 336.]

In writing to Leicester,¹ James made a simi-

¹ The copy in the *Warrender Papers* does not indicate the identity of the person addressed, but the reference to excusing to the queen the plainness of my letter to William Keith makes it clear that it was written to Leicester. The letter is here printed for the first time.

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lar appeal, but his words, read in the light of Douglas's conversation with the recipient of the letter, cannot have failed to reassure Elizabeth and her ministers with regard to Scottish policy if Mary's head should fall on the scaffold. One sentence, "But speciallie how fonde [infatuated] and inconstant I were if I shoulde preferre my mother to the title, let all men judge," is incompatible with an intention to employ, or even to threaten, extreme measures to save her. In the preceding correspondence, the word "title" is regularly used to describe the claim to the succession, and it cannot be understood in any other sense in this letter. James was denying an accusation of being in correspondence with his mother, and he argued that the accusation was improbable because its truth would prove that he was fool enough to prefer his mother to his title. The sentence was an illustration of the argument immediately preceding it rather than a deliberate assurance that the English queen might take his mother's life if she did not interfere with his own claim. But the assurance was implicit in the illustration, and the cold words which follow made it a still clearer indication of the attitude of the

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King of Scots. "My religion ever moved me to haite her course [policy], although my honour constraynis me to insist for her lyffe." Douglas had told Leicester that Mary's execution would not involve a rupture of the Anglo-Scottish League or a Scottish alliance with Spain, provided that James's title was not impaired, and when he read this letter, now printed for the first time from a copy in the *Warrender Papers*, Leicester knew that Douglas had accurately described his master's intentions¹:—

James VI. to the Earl of Leicester.

HOLYROODHOUSE.

15th December, 1586.

RIGHT trusty and wellbelovit cousing, I have no tyme throught the hasty dispeshe [dispatch] of this bearer to ansour in this letter to that which Mr. Archibald wrote to me in your name, but the full ansour thair of ye sall ressave with the Master of Gray who pairtis from [leaves] heir upoun Setterday preciselie and sall nocht fail to pairt the said sevintenth day of this moneth all excusis set asyde; and thairfore as ye love my honour deale for the stay of all proceeding whill [till] he be hard. And I pray yow procure that a pasport for him and another gentelman may mete him be the way. But to my first purpos, this farre shortlie may I say, I am honest, no changear of course, altogether in all thingis as I professe to be, and quhosomevir will affirme that I had ever intelli-

¹ See note 1, p. 99.

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gence with my mother sen [since] the Master of Grayis being in England, or ever thocht to preferre her to my selff in the title or ever delt in any uther foreyne course, they lie falselie and dishonestlie of me. But speciallie how fonde and inconstant I were if I shulde preferre my mother to the title¹ let all men judge. My religioun ever moved me to haite her course althogh my honour constraynis me to insist for her lyffe. Thairfore I pray yow suspend your judgement of me least your credulitie in suche reportis do harme ws bothe. I can nocht also omit to thank yow for your cairfull excusing to the quene the planenes of my letter written to Williame Keith, which she did very farre misconstrue. And thus richt trusty and weil-belovit cousing I commit yow to the holy protection of the most Heich. From my palice of Halyruidhous the xv day of December 1586.

Your most loving and asseured freind

JAMES R.

[Vol. B, f. 337.]

James wrote on Thursday, December 15th.

¹ It is only fair to James to point out that the words "prefer my mother to the title" may not have been intended to convey anything more than the expression which immediately precedes, viz. "prefer her to myself in the title," *i.e.*, that he could not have been conspiring with Mary because such conspiracy would imply that his mother and not himself was Elizabeth's natural successor. But even if this is so, the words "prefer my mother to the title" constituted an ingenuous revelation of the motives which actuated the writer. James knew that Douglas had told Leicester that a report that he would break the League if his mother's life was taken was unfounded, and in this letter he gave him clearly to understand that he cared more about the succession than about Mary, and that his appeal for her life was made merely because he could not honourably assent to her execution. At the same time he disavowed the plain meaning of his letter to Keith.

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On the same day, Douglas sent to Gray a letter which found him on his way south. He had no news to give, but the chance of sending a letter by means of a son-in-law of Sir John Selby (one of the English commissioners sent to Berwick in connection with the ratification of the League) was too good to miss. He enclosed a copy of the "proclamation lately published by the Queenes Majestie, under the great Seale of England for the declaring of the sentence lately given against the Queene of Scottes." The Proclamation had been drawn up on December 4th, but no copy had been available when the ambassdors wrote on the 8th. The Proclamation,¹ after a long narrative, declares that Elizabeth "perceiving the said sentence to have been honourably, lawfully and justly given, agreeable to justice and to the laws of the realm . . . publishes to all her loving subjects and other persons whatsoever that the said sentence and judgment is given in manner aforesaid." Douglas asserted that "the rigour is not so greit heir bot that it mycht hawe beyn helped if the rycht way of dealing had beyn takin." The assertion is inconsistent with his own previous accounts of

¹ Printed in *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 180-182.

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the situation, and was made as part of an accusation against persons unnamed—evidently the French King's agents—who were jealous of the "credit" enjoyed by James in England. Douglas then urged Gray to dissuade James from serious intervention. "Nather the Kingis of France, nather of Spayn vill geve him such ane realme as they vould mak him to indaynegeir," for he was sure of the English succession. He attributed the refusal of a passport for a nobleman to a rumour, disseminated by the French ambassador, that a nobleman was to be sent to "denunce warre to this quene." A postscript added that Douglas could procure information which Maitland wanted but he did not send it because he was not sure that Maitland would use it "for the benefite of his king and cuntrey." He warned Gray that his journey could serve no good purpose, and reminded him of the suspicion with which he was regarded at the English Court.

The letter is printed, for the first time, from the original in the *Warrender Papers* :—

Mr. Archibald Douglas to the Master of Gray.

LONDON,
15th December, 1586.

PLIS your lordship albeit I haif no uther

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subject to vryt upon than that which James Hudson hath caryed to your lordship, nather ony mater moyr importante to say tharupon than be letteris gevin to him may be onderstand [understood], yit haiffing the commodite of this berar, son in law to sir Jhone Selbye, I haif thocht gud to send to your lordship this proclamation whearbye you may persawe that the rigour is not so greit heir bot that it mycht hawe beyn helped if the rycht way of dealing had beyn takin. I am of that opinioun that sum men persawing [perceiving] our soveranis credit to be gretar heir than thay can lyk weile of, hath beyn moyr ernist to introduce sum actionis rather to exasperate materris or at the leist to put thaym owt of frayme, than cayrfull to keipe theym in gud ordour. Heirof the blayme can not be imputed (be ony of this realme) so greitlye to ony Scottisman as to utheris whom I will not accuse. Bot ernistlye I will pray your lordship to humblye requeist his majestie to pause upon the treuthe herof and advisedlye to proceid for his awin veill [weal] and to consider that nather the Kingis of France nather of Spayn vill geve him such ane realme as thay vould mak him to indaynegeir. I haif heard his majestie wislye discourse upon materris, affirming that his credit wold vyrk [work] better effectis than ony force culd do at this quene hir hand. I pray God his majestie may tak the best vay for preserwing of that which his wertheouse behaviour hathe acquired onto him. And I will assure you the samin haith obtained so greit credit onto him in these partis as he may think him self no lesse assured of this Crowne (if God shall preserwe quhill [*i.e.*, preserve him till] that tyme that God shall call upon this quene) than he may be assured of that which he presentlye doeth possess.

Albeit the pasporte which we did crave for the

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nobilmen be not granted theyr is no greit occasion to mervle theyrof, because theyr was ane brut [rumour] spred afoote this towne foure dayes before we ressavd ony letteris, which com owte of the Frenche ambassadour his house, that suche noble men var to cum hyther and to denunce warre to this quene. If that had beyn trew they thocht it micht haif beyn better performed be ane herald of armes than be noble men. Always the letter which James Hudson doethe carrye vill serve for ane passport to ony that shall com wythe the treyn of ane dosane [dozen] horse.

Mr. Randolphe who was this day send hyther be the erle of Leycestir to vesite us dessired that his humble service mycht be presented to his majestie our sovereyn. I may assure your lordship he hathe beyn and is ane gud instrument to our master against all such as wold spred ill brutis and calumneis against his hyenes wharof thayr doethe arise upon smale occasion ane greit nombre stirred at the dewotioun of suche as thinkes theym interessd throw [*i.e.*, affected by] the favour obtened be his majestie in this realme. Pittye it war that gud men shuld not be thankit and ill men rememberit upon. The rest I must reffarr to the nixt. And so I com-mitt your lordship to the protectioun of the Almighty. From London this xv. of December.

Youris alwayes to be commandit

A. DOUGLAS.

The viser [wiser] sort and suche as lovis you heire thinkis that you haif beyn overtakin [deceived] be suche as hathe beyn dessirus to sett you a work in boasting [threatening] that in the meane tyme they mychte mak theyr mercat [market] the better. Sir Frances [Walsingham] at the ernist dessire of suche

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as ar cummed in this cuntrey hathe vritin to our secretar ye theyr [Scotland] who ernistlye pressis to haif intelligens, whiche I wold be glayde for my awin parte that he shuld haif so that he mycht remayn of gud dispositioun to use it weill and for the benefite of his king and cuntrey, wherof if I culd be assured, I shuld procure the samin at my powar. And so far as hathe alreddy beyn done I haif beyn no hynderar thayrof. I can not think that your cumming hyther can serve to ony gud purpose onto suche tyme as yow shalbe in better favour, whiche I think your lordship may procure be purging your self of suche materris as ar layde against yow that I haiff affirmed alreddy to be most untrew. Alwayes your awin affirmatioun is verrey necessayr to be had. Advertise me what you wald haif me to do and it shalbe performed. God be wyth you.

[*Holograph*, Vol. B, f. 338.]

On Saturday, December 17th, the Master of Gray and Sir Robert Melville set out from Edinburgh, accompanied by George Young, a member of King James's Household. Their instructions are thus recorded in the *Warrender Papers*¹ :—

Instructions by James VI. to the Master of Gray.

[17th December, 1586.]

YE shall in our name signifye to our darrest

¹ They have been printed in *Papers of the Master of Gray*, pp. 120–125, from Harleian MSS., No. 1579, fol. 75. The document in the *Warrender Papers* is a copy. Part of the edge is worn away, and words have been supplied from the text in *P. M. G.* That text, however, contains many obvious errors and omits an important paragraph.

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sister the Quene of England that we marvell not a lytle of the lait preposterous and strainge proceadeur agains the Quene our darrest mother, who being a soveraine princes, and in all degrees of the best bloode in Europe, hes bene be subjectis judgit bayth in lyfe and tytle, a daingerous precedent for all princes, and without onye approved example in anye aage or Kingdome, and so contrarye to our honour as hardlye could onye thing have fallin out so prejudiciall therunto.

We doubt not bot our sayd darrest sister has bene sufficiently advertesit how the restraint of our darrest mother hes bene cummonlye interpreted, she being the prince in the world maist neir unto her bayth in bloode and vicinitye, having reposit her cheife warldlye esperance [hope] in her amitye often confirmed be monye freyndlye promises, and be her advyse and persuasion dimitted the governement of this realme, and in her gretest extremitie had her refudge unto her, tan[quam] ad sacram anchoram, luiking for [expecting] no thing les then captivitie or [im]prisonment, bot that jura sanguinis gentium et hospitii ([quae] semper sacrosancta sunt habita) sould have availed as mekle [much] at h[er] hand as could have bene expected of a generous and pitifull pri[nces] neir cousing and kyndlye affected freynd. And thought [though] her [restraint]¹ wes be the most parte thoughte strainge, yet it wald have bene const[rue]d be monye to the better parte yf this mair strainge proceadeur ha[d not] ensewed. Ye shall desyre our said darrest sister to considder advysedlye how all [men]¹ may conceive of so uncouth and rare a forme, sa repugnant to [the]¹ immediat supremicie granted be God to soverayne princes, whose ordinaunces will not permit sacred diademes to be pro-

¹ Supplied from text in *P. M. G.*

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fained nor his hier power in oyne [any] his annoynted be subject to inferiouris, nor tha[ir] lyfes crownes or kingdomes to be judgit or disposit upon at the [appetite]¹ of subjectis, and that sic proceadeur may be thoughte the more [strange]¹ that be na law, speciallye within this yle, vearye subjectis selfis be judgit otherwayes bot be the maist parte thair peares [peers] and [of]¹ equall rank and estate.

Ye shall also declaire unto our said darrest sister that, having made [spe]ciall chose [choice] of her amitye and in affection prefeired her to all oth[er]s], and with the lose [loss] of our narrest and weill affected freynedis contine[wed] in all sinceritye towardes her, omitting na parte of a weill devoted freynd and brother, we did allwayes exspect and be gud desert hav[e] meritite the lyke correspondence and reciproc kyndnes on her pa[rte], wherby she might have bene moved to a freyndlie consideration how sic proceadeur might concerne ws, as well in honour as otherwayes, to have abstenit frome all thingis importing our dishonour or prejudice.

Ye shall desyre our darrest sister to consider what construction can be made of this pretendit proces, and what primices [*sic*] this same may be thoughte of our so strait amitye laitlye contracted, no parte of the sayd pretended proces havinge at onye tyme bene imparted unto us, ather be letter or message, bot the haill deduced without our knowledge or privyite, notwithstanding the special interest we had therein so weill knawen to her, whilk and the sincere observation of our so strait freyndship could not permit ws to be oversene or neglected in a matter of so great weght and daingerous sequele. And yf the samyn had bene tymouslie signified unto us we should have sa satisfait her in honour and suirtye for

¹ Supplied from text in *P. M. G.*

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thame baythe, that she should not have neded to have had recourse to anye sa daingerous remedies and harde effectis as ar lyklye to fall out.

Ye shall expone to our said darrest sister with what just greif we have harde of the rigour intended against our darrest mother, and that nothing in this worlde is more deare unto ws then her lyfe be whome we ressaved lyfe, and what dewtye we owe unto her bayth be the inviolable law of God and straictest band of nature betwene ws, wherein we wold rather yelde our awin lyfe nor offend in a poynt so cairfully recommended unto ws be God and so heichlye twiching ws in honour, hairtlye desyring her to enter in deipe consideration bayth what becommeth ws of dewtye and nature, and what she her selfe wald do, being in our place. Ye shall therefore maist earnestlye deale with her and in our behalfe intercede with all instance that our said darrest mothers lyfe (all wayes so deere unto ws) may be spared, that we may therebye have the better occasion to continew in our gud devotion towardis our said darrest sister and reipe that fruct of our deserts and expectation, remonstring therewithall what a blemishe it wald be to her reputation to deborde [depart] sa far frome her accustomed clemencye and naturall myldnes of her sexe as to embrew her self with her owne bloode, be taking the lyfe of her narrest cousing, being alsua of the lyke calling and sexe to her selfe, besyde the discontentment of monye great princes, wha may be moved therbye, and dyvers other inconvenientis that sic rigour may breade, whilk will not import that suirtye to her owne persone and estate that some wald persuade her may be confirmed be extremitye [harshness].

Yf it shalbe objected unto yow that the preservation of our darrest mothers lyfe carryes with it ane

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apparent dainger to our darrest sister the Quene of England, for albeit our said darrest mother may be kept under restraint, and perhaps stayit frome practising moyen and intelligence, yet that wilbe bot gayning of tyme unto her, and nather her owne esperance nor the hope of her partisantes therby removit, wha for preferment revenge or pretendit religion ar about to conspyre aganis our said darrest sister, bot wilbe still lyinge in waite attending oportunitye and occasions to attene to thair desseyngis ye may answer—her dealing and alledgit attemptates (yf onye have bene) semes to have proceadit of a dispaire our said darrest mother had consaved be lang and strait imprisonment and a womanlye feir deiptye apprehending dainger of her lyfe, and, as [like] all captives naturally reclaming libertie, hes solicited sic as she might move and hes bene inducit be some of a contrarye disposition to our darrest sister to shunne her perrill and seke her delyverie. The most fitte and suire expedient for the indemnitye of our said darrest sister and quyet of this hole yle shalbe be putting her to libertye out of the realme of England upon securitye and joynt obligations of the princes of her kinne freynship and allyance, that nathing shalbe directlye or indirectlye attempted be her or onye her adherents or favorars aganis our darrest sister or her estate. Sa shall bayth will and power to annoy be removit ; and the caus seasing, sa shall the effect.

Yf it shalbe objected that the sparing of our darrest mothers lyfe shall breade perill to the trew christiane religion and professoris thereof ye may answer, it man nedes produce the verye contrarye effect, and cheiflye within this yle ; for that sic as in dede meane the subversion of the trew religion wald ayde thame selfis in their enterpryses be pretexting

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quarrell for her restraint and dainger, and for her respect looke to be assistit be her favorers within this yle, whilkis thay accompt their most importing force yf our countenance or oursight [patronage] might be procurit in anye sort—sa be her preservation and libertie theyr quarrell and chefe moyen shalbe removit, and consequentlie more su[rety?] of religion and quyet to the whole yle shall ensew. And be the [con]trarye be hir death a mair just quarrell may be thairby prete[xed], and thay and thare adherents and favorares mair egyrly enfla[med] to a more cruell desyre of revenge wherein thay wald assuir [themselves]¹ of our ayde and concurrence, who have the cheif interest and schame be her d[eath].

Yf it be objected that the preservation of our darrest mothers ly[fe after]¹ the pretendit condemnation will ather argue the iniquitie [of the]¹ sentence or a feir in our darrest sister, wherbye she is movit [to absteine]¹ frome putting of the same to forder execution, ye may [answer,—it]¹ will breade infinite prayse and imortall name to our said d[arrest] sister for her prudencie myldnes and naturall clemencie [proceeding]¹ only of her owne accorde, besyde and aganis the advyse and [deliberacion]¹ of them wha seking be bloode to settle her estate gives occasion [of greater]¹ unquyetnes thereunto, and will breade to her a number of e[nemys]¹ and commoun misreport. And yf our darrest mothers lyfe be ta[ken, it] will plainlye appeir to proceed of feir, and passion, and be d[emed]¹ of all men *potius vindicta quam justitia*.

Yf the aythe and dainger of the associatis be opponit, ye may [answer—]¹ that *functi sunt officio*, and thocht our said darrest mother being alyfe may

¹ Supplied from text in *P. M. G.*

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be thocht formidable unto them, she shalbe altogider gayned be the clemency of our darrest sister, whose so great prayse, as she shall acquyre therby, and suerty of her persone we ar assured thay will prefer to their particulare dreid or onye future event speciallie be [occasion of]¹ her who be nature can not have long continuance.

Yf it be objected that be the death of our darrest mother factions or [such]¹ as carrye boldened hairtes shall lake ane heid on whome to dep[ende]¹, ye may answer,—her death be lyklichood will rather incense nor terr[ifie] and rather stirre up nor quenche factions, and move and inflame then settle or mitigat boldened hairtes. And yf force and factio[n] doe remane it wilbe easye for thame to find out a conductor [more]¹ to be redoubted than ane afflicted woman of unsound healthe [and]¹ weake and diseasit bodye, who (upon gud securitye and capitulations, being out of the realme of England), is no wayis to [be] fearit, and apparentlye will have no desyre, and possibilly no power to annoye.

Ye shall alsua informe our darrest sister (*quæ sunt nobis undique angustiae et quam ancipiti cura distrahimur*) our naturall deutye and honour preis-singe ws on the ane part, and the caire we have of our said darrest sister (to whome we are entierly devoted) on the other, and above all, our zeale to trew religion, wherupon bayth our states are settled, quhilk and our darrest sisters persone and estate may be all liklyehood be put in full suirtye be joynt and severall bandis obligation and pledges of sic princes as will interpone their fayth and securitye with our darrest mother and ws, that she beinge delyvered to ane quha wilbe allwayes answerable upon his faythe and perrill of the hostages, that she shall nather

¹ Supplied from text in *P. M. G.*

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directlye nor indirectlye deall practise or attemptate aganst our said darrest sisters persone and estate ; sa althoght she wold violate her faythe and forzete the benefite of her libertye and lyfe (quhilk we can not suspect she will, being denuded of all force and moyen, and laking the assistance and gud will of thame of whome she expectis maist ayde, and ar best affected to her) she shalbe able to do na harme be hir self, and shall incurre the wraythe of all sic as hes given their fayth and hostages for her ; and consequentlye our darrest sisters persone shalbe in suirtye and her realme fred frome practises and attemptates, and the daingerous deseyngis prevented of sic as affect the chainge of religion within this yle.

Yf our said darrest sister shall not lyke [approve] of our darrest mothers liberty she may avoyd all perrill be her suir restraint and strait band and aythe, na wayis to practise against our darrest sister nor her estate, conteaning a provision that in case she shall violate her faythe she shalbe willinglie subject to whatsumever ignominie or punishment may be inflicted to a rebell, renuncing in that cace all rank and preveledges of a soverayne prince, and be caution and obligations of the saidis princes to be interponit, wha may be bound for her sincere observing of her aythe or utherwayes to allow of whatsoever proceadeur against her.

Yf nather of the ouvertures forsaidis be thoght sufficient ye shall with all instance preas our darrest sister to set down be advyse of her wysest and best affected counsalloris sic forme of securitye as she and thay shall think sufficient, or possibly or convenientlye may be craved, whereunto we will not onlye yelde for our selfis, bot also do our best endeavour to obtene the performance thereof of all others with whome she will capitulat in this behalf,

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protesting before God the lyfe of our darrest sister is no les deare unto ws in all respectis then the lyfe of our darrest mother or our owne.

[Vol. B, f. 327.]

In these instructions, James certainly made a powerful plea for his mother's life. If they illustrate his pedantry, it must be remembered that he was writing for a woman who knew Latin and used it in her correspondence. He had asked for delay on the ground that he had offers to send, and he proposed two alternative safeguards for Elizabeth's life. Mary might be sent out of England and placed under the charge of one " quha wilbe allwayes answerable." Other sovereigns (presumably himself and the French King) would give not only assurances but also hostages for her good conduct. If Elizabeth did not approve of this suggestion, she might imprison Mary more strictly and insist upon her signing a bond to the effect that, if she engaged in any further intrigue, she would willingly submit herself " to whatsumever ignominie or punishment may be inflicted to a rebell, renuncing in that cace all rank and preveledges of a soverayne prince." Other sovereigns would give " caution and obligations " if Elizabeth preferred this device. For

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the rest, James described Mary's trial as preposterous and strange. A sovereign princess, in all degrees of the best blood in Europe, had been tried by subjects, a dangerous precedent for all princes. He reminded Elizabeth of her kinship to his mother, of the friendly promises she had so often made to her, of the grief that Mary's death must bring to himself, the ally of the English queen, and of the suspicions about the sincerity of their alliance, which an execution must arouse. What would Elizabeth do in his place? Mercy will breed fame and praise and immortal glory to Elizabeth's name, and, for security, if she dislikes the offers he has made, let her say what security she wants—her life is no less dear to him than his mother's or his own.

It was all very right and proper. But James knew that the one point which Elizabeth and her ministers really cared about was the question whether he would cancel the League if they beheaded his mother. In his own private letter to Leicester, and by his omission to repudiate the assurance given by Douglas as he drove in Leicester's carriage, he had indicated that he would take no such step. It was therefore impossible for him to make

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any threat, and the only hint of a threat is the statement (*supra*, p. 112) that Mary's execution would give the Catholics a more just quarrel and that they would assure themselves of the aid and concurrence of himself, who would have the chief shame of her death.

Maitland sent with Gray and Melville a letter to Walsingham, recommending to his kind offices Sir Robert Melville, his "kinsman and dear friend."¹ There was some doubt, which proved to be well grounded, about the reception in England of one who was known to be a friend of Mary, and Maitland reminded Walsingham that Melville was under a great obligation to Elizabeth, "of whom he thankfully acknowledges to hold his life," and that he might therefore be expected to entertain "devotion to the Queen." The reference is to an intervention made by Elizabeth on Melville's behalf when he was captured after the surrender of Edinburgh Castle by the Marian party, in 1573.

The *Warrender Papers* tell the Ambassadors' experiences much more fully than has hitherto been possible. They had a hospitable reception

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 197.

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from the English governor¹ at Berwick, whence Melville proposed to go in advance of Gray. His letter, here printed for the first time, is addressed to Maitland :—

Robert Melville to the Lord Secretary.

BERWICK,
[19th ?] December, 1586.

It maye pleis your Lordship, I cane lerne no forder of our soverans moder estait thene we wnderstud at our departing frome yow accept that the bruyt [report] continewys hard and that this next Setterdaye should be appontyt for executyone, quhilk theye haif bot be brut [only by report]. I beleuve theye will not be so suddane. The governour met ws and dyd ws honour with ane woleye of artelzerye, as also requestyt ws to supper. He makis no impedymnt and gewys [gives] ane pastport fore post horsis. I intend, God willing, to pas fordward in my journaye before the Mester be redye, remittyng to the next advertysment quhayrin I salbe dyligent. I commit your Lordship to the protectyone of the Eternal; this Munnunday at Berwyk.

I sall satisfie your Lordships dyrectyoun send be Mester George Young.

Be your lordships to obeye

S. ROBERT MELVILL.
[Holograph, Vol. A, f. 174.]

Gray, however, went on in front of Melville,

¹ The governor was Lord Hunsdon. But as he had been one of Mary's judges at Fotheringay and was in London in January, it was probably the Deputy who entertained Gray and Melville.

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who was a man of sixty and could not ride so hard as his colleague. He wrote to Maitland from Alnwick on Tuesday, December 20th, forwarding some letters, just received, and complaining that Walsingham was urging severity in dealing with Mary and was making his own "credict diminisit" by lies. A cipher letter, which Gray enclosed to prove "the knaifrie of the man ye vat [wot] of" has not been preserved, but the reference must be to Archibald Douglas, whom we know to have had "no will" that Gray "should have maid this voyage." Keith had already indicated his suspicion of Douglas (*cf. supra*, pp. 86, 89). "Roger," who, with two servants, accompanied Gray from Alnwick and was sent on to London to bid Keith meet Gray at Ware, was Roger Ashton (*supra*, p. 22). The letter is here printed for the first time :—

Gray to Maitland.

ALNWICK,
20th December, 1586.

My Lord being this nicht at Anwick I have reconterit [met] heir sume letters vitche [which] I send to your lordship. By the first that comeis retourne bothe the letters, and that I think shalbe Villiam my brother. Ye may see ye have a freind mo then ye lukit for and I ane feuar [fewer]. I pray

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God quhen ever your intelligence with Sir Francis Valsing[ham] comeis one by his procurement that be for a commoun veil [*sic*]. He vould bothe mak this maiter of the quene to be strict and my credict diminisit, it may be bothe, be leiis [*lies*]. Bot, as ever, I shall do that in me lyethe, God willing. This nicht I am to leive Sir Robert heir at Anwick and my holl tryn [*train*], vho shall follou as thay may, and I mynd, God willing, to be one Saterdag in the morning at Vare. I have no body with me bot Roger and tuo servandis, for Mr. George Young by reasoun of the evil vay durst not ryd post, as in deid I never saw so evil ryding. If any perrell beis [*be*] I shall knou of Villiam Keythe, for I shall send Roger for him one [*on*] Saterdag at nicht, God willing, if men may travell; and be his advyse I shall ether abyd Sir Robert and my tryn or then [*else*] let them know my diligence in coming singlie. I send you heir a letter in chiffre dechiffrit [*cipher deciphered*] quhair you may sie the knaifrie of the man ye vat [*wot*] of. Send it bak I pray you vith Villiam my brother, bot send it not by pacquet. Opin the letter of Villiams and kept it in secreit. I askit quhat opinion men haid of me and the quene hir self at Sir Jhone Selbyis sone in lau Mr. Baumour vho brocht me this pacquet. He sayis I ves [*was*] none so veil lykit of in England in my tym, so that ye may sie this man hes no vil I should have maid this voyage. I commit your lordship to God. From Anwick this 20 of Decemb. 1586.

Your Lordships to command

MASTER OF GRAY.

[*Holograph*, Vol. B, f. 335.]

While the ambassadors were on their way to

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London, Leicester replied, on December 31st, to letters which he had received from James, including that written upon the 15th. He admitted that James might reasonably intercede for his mother, but warned him against "pikant," that is bitter or stinging, expressions which gave Elizabeth just offence. She had shown extreme patience in dealing with Mary, and James, himself a king, ought to regard the question from the standpoint of princes. What would James himself do in such circumstances? Justice should prevail over all other considerations. Let him think well of Elizabeth's action in this case. "Remember how nere yt ys to you and how much nerer yt may be to you." This covert allusion to the succession was followed by an allusion to the statement, made by the English Court, that Mary had left the Crown of Scotland and her claim to the Crown of England, to the King of Spain, and by another appeal to James to remember that Elizabeth is "the person and prince in the world that may doe you the most good or the most harme." He must deal "more moderately" about his mother. Her case was not worth the losing of such a friend as the Queen of England, and Elizabeth's friendship might

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easily be had and kept. Leicester duly apologised for presuming upon His Majesty's courtesy, but he knew that James would not, and could not, resent his plain, and, indeed, brutal, words, in view both of his own recent letter and of previous correspondence about the succession. Leicester's letter, here printed for the first time, has an autograph signature:—

Earl of Leicester to King James.

GREENWICH,
31st December, 1586.

I MUST humbly crave pardon of your majeste that havinge receavyd sondry letters from you since my aryvall in Englund hath not answered hetherunto any of them otherwyse than uppon the first. I requyred Mr. Archball Douglas being present at the occasions I had to have wrytten to signyfy to your majestie my poore opinione concerninge the matters at that tyme in hand with the Quenes Majeste my sofferayne, wherein to my judgement I gave such advyce as besemed one that loved you and wysshed all perfect amytie betwene your majeste and my sofferayn.

And albeyt hit doth appere by all your mynisters the ernest meanes your majeste doth make for the Quene your mother, and that the Quenes majeste hir selfe doth not blame you to deall for the lyffe of your mother, yet to lett such pikant ways to be used as may gyve hir majeste just cause to dowbt your sincere love toward hir that (all thingis dewly considered) shuld be in dede, maketh those, who have

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affected and travelled for the firm amytie to be sorry and carefull that any thing shuld fall owt to the hindraunce therof. Touchinge the Quene your mothers cace I wyll not enter into ytt, not dowbting but your majeste ys sufficyently informyd therof, nether perswade you to call to remembraunce what hath byn and what ys your owen cace with hir. You have, I dowbt not, both wyse and faythfull counsellors to advyse you and to remember you ther of, but thus much I may say to your majeste in the behalf of the Quene my mystris, that I think no prince under heaven wold ether have born so longe so manye daungerous attemptis to the hazard of their lyves as she hath doune, nether wold have forborn the execucion of justyce so longe, the cause being so manyfestly, so openly and so substancyally proceded with all as this hath byn. And albeit no man can blame your majeste to speake for the safty of your mothers lyfe, yet, under your favour, your majeste beinge a prince and a kinge ys with owt partyallytye to wey [weigh] the cace of other kingis and princis as yf yt might be your owen, for that regall justyce ought to be in the bosome of all princis, howsoever affectione may draw them, as yf the procedinge be warrantyd by justyce that any of them doth for the preservation ether of their lyfe or state, they ar to be equally born with all, for as their ys dyfference between tyranny and justyce, so ys ther no les consideracion to be had in the defence of a good cause and a badd, for the glorie of a prince standeth more uppon the defence of just causes than unlawfull conquestis of large domynions. And lett the cace of the Quene my sufferayne be made your majestis, lett yt be any king or prince, being in your handis making tytle to your crowen and shuld ether rayse warre with in your realme ageynst you, or conspyre

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with traytors with in your court or country to kyll you, I wold fayn know what wold be thought fytt for you to doe to such a one, by any faythfull or good subject of youris. Na, gyve me leave, I humbly besech you, to aske even of your self what your self wold think fytt to doe in such a cace. Ther is no other dyfference, but this offence don to the Quenis majeste ys by your mother, when for natures sake your majeste must forgett both your owen cace and the justyce that ought to be allowed amonge princis, for I trust your majeste ys not perswaded that the comon reason that hath byn used aswell by the French embassador as by some of youris ys effectuall to brydell any king with in his owen suffraintye [sovereignty], that his lyffe and deposition shalbe sought by an other prince, and being in their power shall not procede to justyce with them. And yf my playn spech may be with out offence to your majeste, I wold than [would then] wysche you in dede to think well of this cace. Remember how nere yt ys to you and how much nerer yt may be to you. Yt ys well sene to all the world wherefore the lyffe of our mistress ys sought, whose death may be as farr owt of your way [*i.e.*, prejudicial to your interests], as your mothers lybertye had byn heretofore daingerous to your owen estate. And yf yt be trewe which I have harde, your majeste self by hir [Mary's] wyll had aswell byn dysposessed of the poces-sion of that you have [*i.e.*, Scotland] as defeatyd of any remaynder she thought she had interest in [*i.e.*, England]. And therefore as kingis be and ought to be jeleous chifely of their owen estate, so I dowbt not but your majeste wyll depely consider of this cace of your mothers wherein you may perform both the office of a sounne and of a kinge. And as I have always advysed you so doe I styll, for no cause

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except a just cause, whiche I am perswaded ye shall never have, gyve hir majeste any cause to conceave lak of love and frendshipp toward hir. She ys the person and prince in the world that may doe the most good or most harme. Lett no perswasion or devycis make you think otherwyse. The world ys full of practyce and the worst heddis most busye. And trully, sir, yf my advyce may seme any thing worth, as I have geven yt heretofore by Mr. Archball [Douglas], so must I styll wysh you to deall more moderatly in this matter of your mothers. Hir cause ys not worth the loosing of such a frend as (yf your majeste consider rightly) the Quene my sofferayn ys. And what spyryttis [spirits] may rise to perswade the contrary I know not, but take them for falce and abusing spyryttis, yf any such appere in what lykenes soever. I must say that ageyn and ageyn you have no such frend in the world for you at this day as the Quene of England ys, and she may easily [be ?] had and kept yf you wyll, and so may she be lost yf great care be not had. Thus boldly doe I presume uppon your majesteis curtesye and wyll not further trowble you in this matter.

Amonge other your letters I was gladd to find your majesteis constancy in Religion, God strengthen you therin; hit ys [it is] the blessing above all bles-singis, for yt ys the way to the Kingdome above all Kingdomes. And the more you seke to sett fourth the trew glorie of your God the more He shall advaunce your honour and glorie in this world, and be not afrayd for to [too] much pollycye sake to confess and profess Him thorouly without bearing or tallerating [tolerating] with this man or that man that shall any way seke the least dyshonor to your trew professed Religion, for in playn termes I am per-

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swaded that ther ys nether papist nor Jesuytt can love your majeste or wysh you well except he have som hope to fynd favour at your handis or rather a tolleracion of their religyon. Therefore good Kinge, seeke God sincerely and love them that fear Him. And so to his blessyd and safe protectyon I comend humbly your majeste. From Grenwich this last of December.

Your Majesteis to comaund in all lawfull service

R. LEYCESTER.

[Vol. A, f. 184.]

Your Emba. here Mr. Archb. Dowg. and Mr. Kyth do behave them selves very wysely and for your majesteis honor. The Mr. Grey ys dayly lookd for.

From Stamford, on Christmas Day, Gray wrote to Douglas, enclosing a letter to Walsingham. He asked Douglas to discover Elizabeth's intentions and to let him know them and also to reprove her for her unjust suspicions of himself. "Quhair she sayis, she knowis more of me nor ye do; by God, I say this fare [far], if she euer knew me do vrong, it ves for that I enterid forder [further] for hir service than good reason permittit."¹ To

¹ *P. M. G.*, pp. 125-126. Douglas was not likely to be in a position to tell Gray anything further about Elizabeth's intentions. On December 21st he and Keith had asked Davison for another audience of the Queen, apparently without result (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 199).

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Walsingham he wrote that Melville and he were bringing instructions so "modest" as to reassure Elizabeth that James meant no evil by his letter to Keith. In that letter itself, the King's meaning "was modest, and not menacing." He himself knew nothing of it until it was written; it was Maitland who "saw his majesty write the letter." Gray had pointed out that "it might likely be misconstrued," but James meant so "simply" in it that he did not see any need to alter it. Gray went on to deny again any communications with France and offered to have his hand cut off on a scaffold if Elizabeth could prove his guilt, provided that she, on proof of his innocence, would confess that she had twice wronged him.¹

At Ware, on December 30th, the four Scottish ambassadors—Gray, Melville, Keith, and Douglas—met and held a consultation. They told Douglas that he was widely suspected in Scotland, though not by King James, who could not believe that a man whose forfeiture had just been reversed would fail to do his duty. Douglas made a suitable answer, and Melville hoped that his actions would corre-

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 201.

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spond to his words. On December 31st¹ they reached London and found a cold reception, or rather, no reception at all,² for the Government refrained from offering them the courtesies usually shown to ambassadors upon their arrival. On January 1st they asked for an audience and received a rebuff. Elizabeth had been informed that the Scottish envoys had already paid a visit to the French ambassador, and she assumed, therefore, that they had been accredited to him and not to her. Bellièvre,³ the special ambassador sent by

¹ Gray and Melville differ about the date of the arrival in London, which, as we shall see, has some importance. Melville (*infra*, p. 135), says that Gray reached Ware on December 28th, and he himself on December 30th, when the consultation took place, and gives December 31st as the date of arrival in London. Gray (*infra*, p. 145), speaks of the Ware conference as taking place on December 27th, and says that they reached London on December 29th. The French Ambassador, Châteauneuf, assigns a third date, December 30th, for the arrival in London (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 235). As Douglas and Keith did not report the arrival of Gray and Melville to Davison or ask for an interview until January 1st (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 237), I am inclined, in view of the fact that the twelve days' limit had already been exceeded, to prefer Melville's dates rather than to suppose that the application for an audience was delayed for two days after the ambassadors were in London.

² The narrative given in this and the succeeding paragraphs is based upon the letters that follow.

³ His plea, which, in some respects resembles the instructions given by James VI. to Gray and Melville, will be found, with the reply of the English Government, in *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 202-219. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 416-441. Henry III. made offers similar to those sent by James.

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Henry III. to plead for Mary's life, had had his final audience of the Queen and was supposed to be leaving at once for France, and Gray and Melville had sent George Young to convey their respects to him, deeming it improper that they should themselves have a conversation with anyone before being received by Elizabeth.¹ This explanation was sent to Davison on January 3rd by Douglas and Keith, with a further request for an audience, and Elizabeth saw Gray and Melville on Friday the 6th.² It was a "solemn daye" and "dansying and playing" were proceeding in

¹ If they really arrived on December 29th, and did not ask for an audience until January 1st, Elizabeth had some ground for complaining of their "slow expedition," and for suspecting an intrigue with the French ambassador. The resident French ambassador, Châteauneuf, writing on January 1st, says that neither he nor Bellièvre had seen Gray or Melville, though "one of their men" had been sent to himself on the evening of December 31st (*C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 235-236).

² Douglas sent to Davison on January 5th a copy of a note written by George Young to Burghley asking for a postponement of the audience "till Friday" on the ground of "some accident of sickness fallen to the Master of Gray." He suggested that this request might be connected with some intrigue with the French Ambassador and urged Davison to inquire into it (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 239). On January 1st, Châteauneuf had written that the audience had been postponed until the next day, the Epiphany, because of Gray's indisposition; if so, it had been originally fixed for the 5th. I am inclined to suspect that Gray did not want to see the Queen until he knew exactly how she regarded him, and that he was in some way responsible for the delay. He was, of course, ignorant of Douglas's treachery in writing to Davison.

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the Presence Chamber, so that a full and prolonged discussion was impossible. Elizabeth said that her own life was not safe while Mary lived and alluded to James's letter to Keith, and the ambassadors feared the worst, and attributed severity to Elizabeth herself. She told them (untruthfully) that she did not know whether Mary was alive or dead, for she had sent out the warrant long ago, and did not want to know the date of the execution. On January 8th, they saw Leicester, who gave them no hope and referred to Mary's claim to the succession as a reason for her long imprisonment. On the 9th they had their first meeting with Châteauneuf, and learned what he had said to the Queen, but were told of a recurrence of the frequent rumour that Mary was already dead. They asked for another audience and were received on the 10th.

That very day, a French "plot" had been discovered. Châteauneuf and his secretary, Destrappes, were accused by a young Englishman named Stafford, a brother of Elizabeth's ambassador at Paris, of conspiring against the Queen's life. Destrappes was sent to the Tower and Châteauneuf was subjected to a humiliating cross-examination. The whole

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affair was an invention, and a due apology was afterwards made to the French Ambassador, but Stafford and his accomplices were not punished, and the accusation seems to have been designed to put an end to the efforts of Henry III. to save Mary; he had to defend himself and to inquire into the conduct of his ambassador. The story also served to convey to Gray and Melville the extreme danger in which Elizabeth was placed by allowing Mary to live. They were in an unhappy state of mind when they went to Court. All their secrets had been entrusted to Douglas (against Maitland's advice but by royal orders), and Douglas had openly avowed his treachery. On January 5th, he had gone to visit Walsingham at his country house at Barn Elms (near Barnes),¹ he had said to Gray that he was dependent on the English queen and would do nothing to displease her, and he was spreading false rumours about George Young and possibly about Châteauneuf. He had great "credit" at Court, and they feared his influence. They were disheartened by the knowledge that Elizabeth had refused to listen to Bellièvre when he made a plea very similar to

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 239.

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their own ; if she intended to give way, she would have taken care to confer an obligation upon France and Scotland both, not upon King James alone. The rumour of Mary's death was revived, and Young, who, though not accredited as an ambassador, had special instructions from Maitland, thought that Gray and Melville should not begin their discussion until they were assured that she was still alive ; if she was dead, their commission had expired with her.

Leicester, the Lord Admiral (Lord Howard of Effingham), and the Chamberlain (Lord Hunsdon) were with Elizabeth when she received Gray and Melville on January 10th. Gray urged that, if Mary demitted her claim to James, the Catholics would cease to plot in her favour, and Leicester explained that their " meaning was that the King should be put in his mothers place." At this Elizabeth burst out, " By God's passion, that were to cut my own throat, and, for a duchy or an earldom to yourself, you or such as you would cause some of your desperate knaves kill me. No, by God, he shall never be in that place . . . Tell your King," she continued, " what good I have done for him in holding the Crown on his head

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since he was born, and that I mind to keep the league that now stands between us, and if he break it shall be a double fault." With these words she intended to close the interview, but the ambassadors engaged her in some further conversation and asked to be allowed to inquire from Mary herself what they might promise in her name. Elizabeth turned to her councillors and said " Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus," explaining the full meaning of her recondite allusion and applying the moral to the " great offres " which James had sent. Then Gray asked for a respite of twelve days in order that they might communicate with their master. She refused, and Melville begged for eight days. " Not for an hour," was the reply. They proposed to ask for a farewell interview and to start for home on Friday the 13th. In their last audience, they were to " use scharply " their instructions, " for it can not stand with the kingis honour " to say less than the French Ambassador, which was, " ' Le Roy mon maistre ne peult moins faire que se res sentir [ressentir]. ' "

The documents which follow are holograph letters written on January 9th and 10th by Sir Robert Melville and on January 10th by

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George Young to Maitland ; a memorandum sent by Gray to King James on January 12th ; and a letter from him to Maitland, of the same date. The first three are here printed for the first time ; the others were printed (and modernized) in Robertson's Appendix (No. L.) and were transferred from his pages to the *Papers of the Master of Gray*," pp. 126-132). The bearer of some of these communications¹ was Robert Logan of Restalrig (notorious in connection with investigations into the Gowrie conspiracy of 1600). He has been shown by Mr. Andrew Lang to have been an intermediary between Gray and Walsingham, for whom he acted as a spy upon Gray.² Restalrig was in London early in January and in Scotland in February,³ and the letters mention him as the messenger who carried them. One document, of which frequent mention is made by Gray and Melville, has, unfortunately, not been preserved—the "general," or comprehensive, report of the negotiations prepared for King James. Gray, in his letter of January 12th, says that they had intended to enclose it, but

¹ Young's letter, and Melville's of January 9th, as will be seen, were sent by sea.

² *History of Scotland*, by Andrew Lang, II., p. 328.

³ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 261, 275.

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had been warned that "the berer is to be trussit [attacked] be the vay for our pacquet," and that they were to bring it with them.

Sir Robert Melville to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,
9th January, 1587.

It maye pleis your lordship I haif wretyne thyre [these] few lynis be seye [by sea] in respect the schipe wes to depart before we could haif occasyoun to dyrect ane messynger of our awyne, albeit I houe your lordship sall haif other letters before this present cwme [come] to your hand. Apone the penult of December we come to Ware quhayr the Mester of Grhaye wes before me two nyght and with hym Mester Arschbald Douglas and Wyllyme Kethe. We consultyt altogidder apone our negotiatyoun quhow to preweyne [prevent] the extremite that ys brutyt to be wsit [reported to be used] apone our soverans moder quharbye the gret amyte that ys confermit betwene there majestes maye contynew, and opnit [opened] to Mester Arschbald the gret jalowsye moneye [many] of our cuntreye hes consavit of hym, albeit that the Kings majeste will beleyve no synister report bot rather luk that he will consyder of the gret favour he hes of layt be his majeste and discharge hym of this negotyatyoun as becwms ane dewtyfull subject ; quho mayd syk ansour therto as maye satysfe geve [if] his actyouns salbe correspondent to his speache.

We come to Loundoun apone the next daye and send to haif awdyence. The first answer we resavit wes that her majeste wnderstud we had delt with the Frenche imbassadour and wes dydirectit to hym and

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not to her majeste, albeit the treughe [truth] is we forbure to speak with monsieur Bellywer quho had takyne leyve of her majeste the daye before our cumyng, and thought it convenient not to present our selfs to none ontyll it pleasit her majeste to heyr ws; nochttheles that Bellywer stayeit fywe dayeis efter our cumyng. Apone the sext of this monethe we had awdyence in the chalmer of presens, beyng ane solemne daye, quhayr wes dansyng and playing so that we enteryt not deyplye [deeply] with her majeste, quhowbeit it plessit her to regret her awyne [own] estait, and that there could be no assurance of her lyf, our soverans moder lywing [living]. I ansouryt therto as your lordship will onderstand be our other letters, quhilk I houpe sall cwm before this to your hand. Her majeste insistit apone the first letter wretyne be our soverane, quhilk wes ansouryt that, geve [if] her majeste interpret the sayd letter according to his hyenes gud meanyng and in als gud part as his majeste acceptyt harder letters send be her majeste, there wald [would be] no occasyone of offence consavit be the sayd letter, besyds that his majeste had satsysfeit it be ane other letter sens [since]. We onderstud nothing be her speache bot extremite, nother cane we lerne otherwys bot the worst daylie, quhilk is thought strange be all parsouns accept [persons except] theme selfs. The treughe is that geve [if] straytnes be wsit, her majeste wilbe pressit therto bye her awyne naturall [own disposition]. We haif spokkyne the erle of Lyckester quho delt kurteslye with ws, bot kepis the lyk speache. Yesterdaye we passit to the Frenche imbassadour resident heir, quho mayd ws ane deductyone [summary] of monsieur Bellywers proseding, quho delt weraye discretlye and mayd offers weraye apparant fore her majestes surtye, albeit to this present we can

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lerne nothing bot the worst, and presentle informit that scho sould be [has been] execut alredye.

We are to haif audyence this daye and thereafter to dyrect ane of our awyne [own] to his majeste in kays occasyone be not offerit that we be the first our self [*i.e.*, to send one of their number with a report to James, unless it should turn out that they themselves had to go back at once]. I will forbeyr to truble your lordship forder bot to assure yow that sens our cumyng hyther the Mester of Grhaye hes to this present behawit hymself discretelye and Wyllyeme Kethe hes omittyt no thing that oneye jentylmane in his rowme [place] could parforme, notchtheles [notwithstanding] of the hardnes of the tyme besyds dyvers occasyouns ensewyng [ensuing] quharbye ane of greter experience myght owerseyne hymself [fall into error]. It maye pleis your lordship present my humill service to his majeste. Ceassing to truble yow forder committys your lordship to Gods protectyone; the nynthe of Januar at Loundoune. be your lordships to obey

S. ROBERT MELVILL.

Pleys your lordship to remembyr my hartly commendatyouns to my lady your bedfallow, the Justyce Clark with the prowest my lord of Blantyre and the Controller with the Captain of the Castell.

[*Holograph*, Vol. A, f. 177.]

Sir Robert Melville to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,
10th January, 1587.

SENS the wretyng of this other letter we haif had awdyence of her majeste, quhayr we had refusall of all our offers and hard ansours fynding nothing bot extremite ment toward our soverans

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moder, and apone swm weraye [very] raysonable propotityouns concernyng our negotiatyoun I haif fallowit his majestes dyrectyoun so neyr as I could, gewing no occasyoun of oneye word to irtat. Nocththeles of ower [our] gret mater offeryt we haif alredy put in wret all our prosedings in particular, houping to haif send theme to his majeste and resavit ansour agane before our departyng frome hens, bot beyng pressit be her majeste apone our last awdyence to mak our offers altogidder, assuryng ws that we sould haif no longer delaye nor haif [have] surtye of his majestes moders lyf, we deducyt them in syk ordour as we wer instructyt maist raysonable to haif beyn resavit be all indifferent parsouns [impartial persons]. Albeit it apperis syk resolutyoun tayne heyrin as no offers will serve bot hes (I meyn her Cunsell) persuadit her majeste to ws [use] extremite and wald haif dyspatchit ws [us] at our last awdyence refusinge to geve ane heure of delaye to his moder, nocththeles of oneye [any] request we mayd in his majestes nayme. I wes partycularlye conpellit to mak ansours in syk poynts as I could not of raysoun omit so that the hard speachis wer dressit to my self as your lordship will heirefter may partycularlye onderstand. We intend to craue awdyence to tak our leywe [leave] the morne and retourne hayme be Gods grace. I thouht meyt to wret this far be seye albeit I houpe our other letters sall cwm before to your hand. I will tak my leyve fore this present efter my humill commendatyouns presentit to my ladye your bed-fallow with the rest mentyonat in this other letter. I commit your Lordschipe to the protectyoun of the Eternall; the tenthe of Januar at Loundoune.

Be your lordschips to obeye

S. ROBERT MELVILL.

[*Holograph*, Vol. A, f. 173.]

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George Young to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,

10th January, 1587.

PLEASE it your lordship we are heir in greatest perplexitie and strate that ever men was in, hardlie recueillit [received] of her majestie, mair hardlie of the counsale and in effect misknawin of [ignored by] our haill acquaintance. To speik it as it is cassin in [thrown into] a dispaire to do any gude in the earand we came for all thingis disharting ws on every syde and every hour, geving ws new advertisement that we deale for a dead lady. We have as yit bot anis [once] gottin awdience and thairin her majestie affirmit upon her honour that sho could not assure quhether sho was alyve or nocht in respect sho had directid out the warrand lang ago and wished not to be maid privie to the day of execution. Sensyne [since then] all our intelligence assureis ws sho [she] is gone. This day at efternone we have trystit [arranged] to ga down and to enter to our offres bot with my will it sall nocht be, at leist they sall not dip into the cause till they may have assurance that sho is still alyve that they deale for, seing that utherwyse thair commissionn expyris as ever it be.

Thair is na uther hope bot that that is nocht salbe this oulk anis [that if she is not already executed, she shall be this week] quhat ever we can say or offre, for Bellœuvre hes in effect left nathing unlaid out that we have in instruction baith toward the iniquitie of the proces and offres for her lyffe, as Chasteaneuf hes schawin ws, offring in ende quhatsumeuer was in the king of Frances possibilitie that mycht assure her majestie from her practises [Mary's plots] in tyme to cum, bot all was to na purpos for his offres were thocht insufficient; and for thame selffis [the English] they could sie nathing quhat to craue that they mycht

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call a seurtie. Swa we having nocht ellis to say can nocht appearandlie expect ane uther answer, for utherways it may be thocht they wald have rather pleasourit baith nor ane [*i.e.*, if Elizabeth intended to yield, she would have done it as a concession to both France and Scotland]. I have nather tyme nor laiser [leisure] to discourse unto your lordship the particulariteis of sindrie thingis that I had trystit [undertook] for yow, the skipper awayting on my hand, ready to mak out this instant tyde, and our barge on the uther syde attending for [awaiting to take] ws to the court. Onelie gif [if] we wryte nocht frelie with [*i.e.*, in letters sent by] Restalrig according to his majesteis expectation and your lordshipis that ye will let it be excusit upon the feare we have of intercepting seing the exemple they gave ws yisterday at the latest be a packet of the Frenche ambassadouris directid to the king, reft [snatched] fra twa gentilmen that were careing it to Bellœuvre; and thame selffis brocht bak agane to court. Chasteauneuf gais [goes] down this day to crave the redelivery of the packet and to assure the quene that gif he get it nocht he will away [leave] the morne except he be detenit be force. He is vehementlie chargeit with the devyse and counsale of this newe conspiracie aganis the queneis lyffe quhar of [whereof] the intendit executer is allegeit to be in handis [arrested]. We are privlie advertisit that the quene hes written to his majesty [the French King] to geve him knowlege of his dealing and to knaw gif he had any sic command of him, quhilk gif he [the King] deny, he [Châteauneuf] salbe immediately apprehendit and tryit as a privat persoun. He hes gottin knowlege of it this mornynge and protestis before God he never knew nor was maid privie at any tyme to any sic purpos. He fearis na man samekle [so

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much] as Mr. Archibald to have bene his dilatar [legal accuser], and in very deid quhen we gaid [went] to him yisterday Mr. Archibald excusit him that he had trystit [had an engagement with] my Lord of Leycester and was to ga to court besydis to speik for bukkis [bucks] to his majestie. Quhat confort we have gottin of Mr. Archibald in this cause the event will testifie. We rewe [rue] now altogether that your lordshipis counsale was not followed quhen we came away; quhilk gif it had, the secretis of our cause quhilk be his majesteis commandment we were directed to imparte unto him [Douglas] had nocht bene in sa many mowthis as we sensyne have found thame. His promeis quhen we did it was that he sould afauldle [simply] and trewlie concurre with ws in any course that we thocht meatest to worke our intent, bot sensyne he hes bene plane with the Master that he wald do his hienes service bot will nawayis displease her majestie sen he hes nathing to leve on bot [except] that he hes of her, and wald advise his majestie nocht to geve her occasioun be ower [by over] great earnestnes in sic a cause sa universallie exclomit upoun to think of him that may do him na gude [*i.e.*, Douglas had said that he would advise James not to risk anything by an earnest appeal for anything so universally unpopular as his mother's pardon]. And yisterday at the nearest [*i.e.*, as recently as yesterday] shewe him that it was folie to hope for any uther in this mater nor [than] extremitie; for him selff, his freindes had written to him to mak his compt of another contray [country] in cace our earand gaid nocht weil, and sen he seys [sees] it tak that course he will contene him quhar he is, lukiing that gif ever materis pak up agane his majestie sould finde occasioun to imploye him and his credite als farre as any utheris that he could chuse.

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He is in greatest jalousie of your intelligence with Mr. Walsinghame fearing that it sall tende in ende to his discredite heir, and thairfoir hes bene very earnist with the Maister to keip him in gude termes in this mater wishing that he tuke heid that he lost nocht his credite with the quene be ower great earnistnes in a mater that he assureis him will not mende, for he syes [sees] utheris busie to undermyne him, and gif he saw nocht till it, it sould prove in ende his utter wrak [ruin]; and opynnis up to him how he had learnit of Mr. Secretary that I was to come to him with instructioun how to rynne [run] ane uther course—quhat it was he knew not—and that I had sent to Mr. secretary [Walsingham] to requyre him that he wald appoynte me some odde ower [hour] to opin up unto him my direction [instructions]. Quhen the Master shew me it, God knawis how farre it essayit [tried] my patience quhen I met with that man [Douglas], for he had querellit me twyse of befoir with mere inventions of his awin and the devill him selff could never have devysit ane falser nor this is,—it being of treuth that I hade nather met nor send to Mr. Walsinghame at any tyme sen our cummyng and for that cause have still forborne to delyver him your lordshipis letter till I sie quhat successe our earand takkis. Alwayes the Master wald nocht let me conteste it with him [*i.e.*, charge Douglas with it], because he promisit to him nocht to revele it agane to me. Thus are we handlit and can not mende ws as thingis gois till it sall please his majestie to send from thence some ordour to it. Evin now there is advertisement brocht in to ws that ane uther of the Frenshe ambassadouris men sould be [has been] laid handis on and sindrie gentilmen at court that were noted to have borne company with the allegeit attempter of the fact [plot] apprehendit and im-

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prisonit. All thir [these] are nathing ellis bot spurris to post away her [Mary's] lyffe quhome they accompt the cause thairof. As our offres takkis effect or lyking at efter none [noon] your lordship sall onderstand immediatly be ane of our awne. The Master hes send in evin now capitane Bruce to ws to advertise ws that ane gentilman of credite hes send him word that our quene was execute upon Thurisday last at evin, and for a takin [token] that upon Fryday the quene heir resaving the executeris [executioner's] letter as appearit red it and with some teares said immediatly that sho was sory for it; alwayis sho hopit that it sould be the meane that sho sould leve in greater quietnes heirefter, unspecifeing any further quhat it was or quhat sho meanit be it. To geve your lordship this for certanetie I can not, bot ye have it as it is send ws and we can geve yow na seurtie of the contrair. Sir Robert hes send be Bellœuvres secretar ane hundreth crownis to your lordshipis brotheris sounne and with thame ane very earnest letter to followe furth his studies there and na wayes to come hame till he have attenit to some reasonabill advancement in letters and be sent for be your lordship. All uther thingis remitting to oure nixt occasioun quhilk I think salbe with in twa dayis at the farrest, I leve this present at my hartiest commendations of service to your lordship and my lady your bedfallow, praying the Eternal to preserve yow be his blissed protection and keping. From Londoun this tent of Januer 1586.

This letter detenyng me unganging [without going] doun to court, and thinking it sould nocht be amisse to detene the bearer a tyde by dyet [beyond the appointed time] upon the event of thair audience, I finde at thair returnyng that they have opynnit up all thair offres to her majestie without any sic effect

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as was expected, the raisonyng that they have had intill thame uttering a great disdayne into her majestie rather nor any gude inclinaioun to heare of any middes [compromise]. In ende, quhen all was spent and that they showe her they had na mair to say except that it mycht please her to grant thame speche of the quene [Mary] her selff to knaw quhat further they mycht promise in her name, sho nocht onelie refusit it altogether bot thairwith turned her to the consale that was standing at the farre windo in the chamber and said unto thame *Parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus*, and tald thame on that tale at lenth and applyit it in ende to the great offres quhilk sho had hard they careit [carried] to her as thoch sho had noch bene acquainted with thame before sho hard the same of thair mowthis. In ende, retiring thame they prayit her that the quene mycht still remane alyve for ten or xij dayis till his majestie mycht be advertisit, quhilk was refusit. Sir R[o]bert desyris onelie aucht [eight]; sho ansyris that sho wald not consent to grant thame ane hour; and sa they come away. Heirupoun thinking that they can do na gude to linger heir, they direct away William Murray the morne with Restalrig to give his majeste advertisement of thair retraict [return] and ansyr reserving the discours quhilk they intendit to have sent of thair proceedingis heir to thair awne cummyng for feare of intercepting. Mr. Archibald intendis to remane except he be sent for, and quhen he is, I think he meanis to advise or [before] he obey. Gif any uther thing occurre in the meane tyme, your lordship may expect it be William Murray. The morne we send to crave our leve and pasport.

Your lordships humble servant

M. G. YOUNG.

[Holograph: Vol. A, f. 175.]

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Memorial to James VI. from the Master of Gray.

LONDON,

12th January, 1586-7.

It wil please your Majestie I have thocht meiter to set down all things as thay occurit, and all advertismentis as thay came to my earis, then jointly in a letter.

I came to Ware the 24 of December, and send to William Keythe and Mr. Archibald Douglas to advertis the Quene of it, lyk as thay did at thair audience. Sche promisit the Quene your Majesteis mothers lyf should be spairit till we wer hard. The 27 thay came to Ware to me: the quhilk day Sir Robert came to Ware, quhair thay schew us how fare they haid alreedy gone in thair negociation. Bot for that the discourse of it is sete down in our generall letter, I remit me to it, only thus fare I wil testifie unto your Majestie that William Keythe hes usit himself rycht honestly and wysly til our coming, respecting all circumstances, and cheifly his colleague [Douglas] his dealings, quhilk in deid is no better then your Majestie knew alreedy.

The 29 day of December we came to Loundoun, quhair we wer no wayis freindly receavit, nor efter the honest sort it hes pleasit your Majestie to use hir Embassador: never man send to weilcom or convey us. This same day we understood of Mr. de Bellievre his lieve taking, and for that coustume permittit not, we send our excuses by Mr. George Young.

The first day of January William Keythe and his colleague, according to the coustume, send to crave our audience. We receavit the ansuer conteinit in the generall letter. And could not have ansuer til the 6 day. What wes dune that day, your Majestie

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hes it in the generall, yit we wer not out of esperance at that tym, albeit we receavit hard aunsuers.

The 8 day we spak with the Earle of Leicester, quhair our conference wes, as is set down in the generall. I remarquit this, that he that day said plainly, the deteining of the Quene of Scotland prisoner, wes for that sche pretendit a succession to this Crown. Judge then by this what is thocht of your Majestie, as ye shal heire a little efter.

The 9 day we spak with the Frenche Embassador, whom we fand verie plaine in making to us a wyse discours of all his proceidingis and Mr. de Bellievres. We thankit him in your Majesteis name, and opinit sutche thingis as we haid to traict [treat] with this Quene, save the last point: as more lairgly is set down by our generall.

It is thocht heir, and sume freindis of your Majesteis advertisit me, that Bellievre his negociation wes not effectuell, and that the recident [resident French Ambassador] wes not privie to it, as in deid I think is treu, for since Bellievre his perting [departure] thair is a talk of this Chasteauneuf his servandis taken with his holl paipers and pacquets, quhilkis he wes sending in France, for that they chairge him with a conspiracie of lait agenst the Quene heir hir lyf. It is alledgit his servandis hes confessit the maiter, bot quhom I shall trust I know not. Bot til I see it preufed [proved], I shall accompt him a honest man, for in deid so he appeiris, and one, without doubt, who hes bein verie instant in this maiter. I schew him that the Quene and Earle of Leicester haid desyrit to speik with me in privat, and cravit his opinion; he geve it frely that he thocht it meitest. I schew him the reasoun why I communicat that to him, for that I haid bein suspectid be sume of her Majesteis [Mary's] freindis in

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France to have dune evil offices in hir service, that he should be my witnes that my earnest dealing in this should be a sufficient testimonie that all wes levis [lies], and that this knaife, No [Nau], who now haid betraitt hir, haid in that done evil offices. He desyrit me, seeing sche [Mary] saw only with uther folkis eyis, that I should no wayis imput it to hir, for the lyk sche haid dune to himself be Nau [Mary's secretary] his persuasion. I ansuerit he should be my witnes in that.

The 9 day we send to court to crave audience, quhilk we gat the 10 day. At the first sche said, a thing long luikit for should be weilcome quhen it comis. I would now see your masters offres. I ansuerit, No man makis offres bot for sume cause. We would, and lyk [*i.e.*, please] your Majestie, first know the cause to be extant for quhilk we offre, and lykwayis that it be extant¹ til your Majestie have hard us. I think it be extant yit, bot I wil not promeis for ane hour; bot you think to chift [shift] in that sort.² I ansuerit, We mynd not to chift, bot to offre from our Souveraine all things that with reasoun may be; and in speciall we offreit as is set down in our generall. All wes refusit and thocht no thing. Sche callit on the thre wer in the hous, the Earle of Leicester, my Lords Admirall, and Chamberlane, and verie dispytfully repetit all our offres in presence of them all. I opinit the last pairt and said, Madame, for what respectis is it that men dealis agenst your person or estait for hir [Mary's] cause? Sche ansuerit, Because thay think sche sall succeid to me, and for that sche is a Popist. Appeirantly, said I,

¹ A request for an assurance that Mary was still alive.

² The words "I think . . . that sort" are reported as spoken by Elizabeth, who affected ignorance as to whether Mary was dead or alive.

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bothe these causes may be removeit. Sche said, sche would be glaid to understand it. If, Madame, said I, all that sche hes of rycht of succession wer in the King our Souveraines persoun, wer not all hoype of Popistis removeit? Sche ansueris, I hoype so. Then, Madame, I think the Quene his mother shall willingly dimit all hir rychtis in his persoun. Sche ansueris, sche haith no rycht, for sche is declairit unhaibil [unable]. Then I said, If sche have no rycht, appeirandly the hoype ceassis alredy, so that it is not to be feirit that any man attempt for hir. The Quene ansueris, Bot the Popistis allowis not our declaration. Then let it fall, say I, in the Kingis persoun be hir assignatioun [*i.e.*, let the claim fall to James by Mary's resignation of it into his hands]. The Earle of Leicester ansuerit, Sche is a prisoner, how can sche dimit? I ansuer, The dimission is to hir sone, be the advyse of all the freindis sche hes in Europe, and in caice [case], as God forbid, that any attempt coustit [cut] the Quene heir away, who shall pertie with hir [take her part] to preuve the dimission or assignation to be ineffectuall, hir sone being opposit pertie [party], and haveing all the princes hir freindis for him, having bandit [combined] for the efficacie of it with His Majestie of befor. The Quene maid as sche could not comprehend my meining. And Sir Robert opinit the maiter agene, sche yit maid as tho sche understood not. So the Earle of Leicester ansuerit, that our meining wes that the King should be put in his mothers place. Is it so, the Quene ansueris, Then I put my self in a wors caice then of befor. By Gods passioun that wer to cout my awin throte, and for a duche or a earldome to your self or sic as you, you would cause sume of your desperat knaifeis kil me. No, by God, he shall never be in that place. I ansuerit, He craveis no thing of your

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Majestie, bot only of his mother. The Earle of Leicester ansuerit, That wer to mak him pertie to the Quene, my mistress. I said, He wilbe fare more pairtie if he be in hir place throu hir deathe. Sche would stay no longar, bot said sche would not have a wors in his mother's place; and said, Tell your King, what good I have dune for him in houlding the Croun on his head since he wes borne; and that I mynd to kepe the league that standis now betwene us, and if he brak, it shalbe a double fault. And with this, myndit to have bidden us faireweil, bot we escheuit [*i.e.*, avoided such a close of the interview]. And I spak, craveing of hir that hir lyf might be spairit for xv. dayis; sche refusit. Sir Robert craveit for ane eicht dayis. Sche said—Not for an hour; and so geid [went] hir away.

Your Majestie seis we have delyverit all we haid for offres. Bot all is for no thing, for sche and hir counsell hes leyit [laid] a determinatioun that they mynd to follow furthe, and I see it comis rather of hir counsell then hir self, quhilk I lyk the wors; for without doubt, Sir, it shall cout afe [cut off] all freindschipe ye haid heir; althocht it wer that [even if] onis [once] they had meinit weil to your Majestie, yit remembering them selfis, that they have medled with your mothers blood, good faithe, they cannot hoype great good of yourself, a thing in trothe I am sorry for. Further, your Majestie may persave by the laste discourse of that I proponit: if they haid meinit weil to your Majestie, they haid usit it utherwayis then they have dune, for reason hes bound them. Bot I dare not wryt all I mynd, God willing, to speik in this maiter, becaus we luk shurly our letters shalbe troucit [seized] by the way.

For that I see, privat credict nor no moyens can alter thair determination; althocht the Quene agene,

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and the Earle of Leicester hes desyrit to speik with me in particulaire [alone], I mynd not to speik nor shall not : bot assuredly shall let all men see that I in particulaire wes no wayis tyit to England, bot for the respect of your Majesteis service.

So albeit at this tym I could not effectuat that I desyrit, yit my uprycht dealing in it shalbe manifestit to the wourld. We ar, God willing, then to crave audience, quhair we mynd to use scharply our instructiouns, quhilkis hithertils we have usit verie calmly, for we can, for your honours cause, sey no les for your Majestie then the Frenche Embassador hes said for his maister, *qu'il se*. . . . So I pray your Majestie, consider my uprycht dealing in your service and not the effect [result], for haid it bein doable [practicable] by any, I micht have heir had credit, bot seing I came only for that cause, I wil not my credict shall serve heir to any further purpose. I pray God preserve your Majestie and send you a true and sincere freindschipe. From Loundon this 12 of January 1586.

Your Majesteis most heumble Subject
and Servitour

MR. OF GRAY.

I understand the Quene is to send one of hir amis [friends] to your Majestie.

[*Holograph* : Vol. C ; printed in Miss
Warrender's *Illustrations*]

Master of Gray to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,
12th January, 1586-7.

MY LORD, I send you theis lynes with this inclosit to his majestie quhairby your lordship shall understand hou maiters gois heir. And befor all

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thingis I pray your lordship move his majestie to respect my diligence and not theeffect in this negocia-tion, for I sueir [swear] if it haid bein for the croun of England to my self I could do no more ; and let not unfrendis have avantage of me for the veurld [the world] shall see that I loveit England for his majesteis service only. I luk shurly to find your lordship freind as ye maid promeis, and by God I shalbe to you if I can. Villiam Keythe and I devysit, if maiters haid gone veil [well], to have run a course that your lordship micht have heir bein credict and others disapointit. Bot nou I vil do for you as for my self quhilk is to caire for no credict heir, for in conscience they mein not honestly to the king our souveraine, and if they may, he vil go the get [road] his mother is gone or schortly to go. Thairfor my lord without all kynd of scrupull I pray you to advyse him [James] the best is not this way [*i.e.*, does not consist in friendship with England]. They sey heir that it hes bein said to them by one vho hard it from you that ye desyrit not the king and England to aggre becaus it vould vrak [wreck] the noble men, and geve ane example of it by king James the fourt. I answerit in your name that I ves assurit ye haid never spokin it. Mr. Archibald is the speikar of it, vho I assur your lordship hes bein a poisoun in this maiter, for they leine verie mikil [lean very much] to his opinioun. He cairis not, he sayis, for at lenthe the king vilbe faine to deall this vay ether by fair meinis or necessitie, so that quhen he daillis [deals] this course he [Douglas] is assurit to be veilcome. To set doun all that hes past of the lyk proposis [pur-poses] it vould consume more paiper then I have heir so I differ [defer] it to meiting. Thair is a neu conspiracie alledgit agenst the quene to have bein intendit be the Frenche Embassador recident, three

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of his men takin, bot I think in the end it shall preuve no thing. Mr. Stafford vho is Embassador for this quene in France is tuitchit [touched] vith it; his brother is takin heir. Always it hes dune this herme [harm] in our negociatione, that all this counsell could not move the quene to mele [meddle] with the quene of Scotlandis blood til this invention ves found furthe [*i.e.*, till this plot was invented]. I remit all uther thingis to the inclosit. Ve myndit to have send to his majestie a discour quhilk ve have set doun of all our proceedingis since our hither coming bot ve ar surly advertisit that the berar is to be trussit be the vay for our pacquet so that ve differ it til our awn coming. This I have put in a privie pairt besyd the pacquet. Ve shall, I think, tak leive one Fryday the 13 day, quhair ve mynd exactly to follou the rigour of our instructiouns, for it can not stand with the kingis honour that ve sey [we say] les then the Frenche embassador quhilk ves "*Le Roy mon maistre ne peult moins faire que se resentir.*" So that about the 24 I think ve shall, God villing, be at home except yit sume stey [yet some delay] come, quhilk ve luk not for. The quene and thearl of Leicester hes desyrit to speik vith me bot I refusit save in presence of my colleague by reasoun I see a determinatioun quhilk particular [individual] credit can not helpe and I crave no credict bot for that cause. It vil please your lordship retire the inclosit from his majestie and keipe it. So efter my service commendit to your self and bedfellou I commit you to God. From Loundoun this 12 of Januarij 1586.

Your lordships to be commaundit

MR. OF GRAY.

[*Holograph*: Vol. A, f. 179.]

These communications indicate a change of

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tone on the part of the Master of Gray. In his Memorandum he described enmity with England as unavoidable. Mary's death, he warned James, would destroy any friendship which the King of Scots had formed with English statesmen; even if Elizabeth's councillors had once meant well to James, their attitude would necessarily alter. "Remembering themselfis that they have medled with your mothers blood, good faithe, they cannot hoype great good of [expect favour from] yourself." In his letter to Maitland, he insisted that the English ministers "mein not honestly to the king," and urged him to advise James that "the best is not this way." The explanation of Gray's change of attitude, as it seems to me, lies in the treatment he received in England. His letters to Walsingham (*supra*, pp. 41, 59), written before his embassy, do not entirely confirm his asseverations, expressed contemporaneously to Douglas, that he intended to be a "Scottis man" and do his best for Mary; he was resolved to maintain or recover the "credit" he had enjoyed at the English court. When he reached London he found himself suspected and traduced. Archibald Douglas had Elizabeth's ear, and was playing him false.

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In his letter of January 12th, he assured Maitland that he desired no "credit" in England, except as a pleader for Mary's life. He found that he enjoyed no "credit" of any kind. Leicester was determined to ruin him and sent to James letters¹ which Gray had written before leaving Scotland, letters so "odious" [odious] as to imperil his honour and reputation for ever. The letters have not been preserved, but they are definitely known to have related to Mary, and they doubtless contained expressions similar to the assertion made by Gray to Douglas in September, that the necessity of all honest men's affairs required that Mary should be out of the way. Whether Gray knew this when he wrote on January 12th or not, he fully realised that he had lost all influence at the English court, and he had been rudely received by Elizabeth. One sentence in his letter to Maitland is undoubtedly an indication of personal pique.

¹ The letters were sent in January by Sir Alexander Stewart (cf. *infra*, p. 158). Cf. Lang's *History*, II., p. 328, and *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 327 (where the letter quoted from MS. by Mr. Lang is printed in full). Stewart revealed Leicester's treachery to Gray, and Mr. Lang inferred that he gave the letters to Gray, but Richard Douglas, writing to Archibald Douglas in May, mentions that one of them was in the King's possession (*Hatfield Papers*, III., p. 254).

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"If they [the English ministers] may, he [James] vill go the get [road] his mother is gone or schortly to go." This was nonsense; none of Elizabeth's advisers wished to put James out of the way, and the over-straining of his case reveals Gray's motives. During his embassy, he probably did his best for Mary; the contemporary tradition that he whispered "*Mortui non mordent*" into Elizabeth's ear was probably a result of Leicester's revelation of his earlier letters, in which the phrase may easily have occurred. But if he did his best for Mary, it was only because he was, for the time, convinced that he himself had nothing to expect from England, and that it would be more advantageous to support the policy of negotiations with France, which he believed Maitland to favour.¹

Gray and Melville had what they expected to be a final audience on January 15th.² They were more courteously treated by Elizabeth, whom they found "something mitigated"; but

¹ Douglas did not believe in Gray's honest zeal for Mary. He told Davison that the three Scottish ambassadors were "verray ill dewoted, the one for pryde, the uthor for mater, and the thrid for folye," and it is clear that "pryde" must refer to Gray, and "mater" or zeal for the cause to Melville. *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 244.

² Young says January 15th. Gray and Melville do not give precise dates, and they may be reporting more than one audience.

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her councillors—Sir Christopher Hatton (who became Lord Chancellor that same year), Lord Hunsdon, and Lord Howard of Effingham—“began to storme” against any suggestion of sparing Mary’s life. The Queen, however, appeared to find the Scottish offers “reasonable,” and she asked Gray and Melville to remain a day or two in London. But thereafter a fresh difficulty had arisen. The ambassadors were told that letters had come from Scotland indicating that James was not serious in his intervention. This, in itself, was no new trouble. Gray and Melville told James that, all along, their greatest difficulty had been an impression that their master “dealis superficially in this mater or that with tyme ye may be movit to digest it.” They believed that they had, though with great difficulty, removed this impression, but it had just been revived. The real ground of Elizabeth’s confidence in her royal cousin’s digestion must have been the knowledge that he did not prefer his mother to his title, but it is very unlikely that either Gray or Melville had seen James’s letter to Leicester, and it is obvious that neither Elizabeth nor Leicester could reveal its existence to them. No trace can be found, either in the

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English State Papers or in the Hatfield MSS., of the Scottish letters which, the ambassadors were assured, were being “postit dailie to this court,” assuring Queen and Council that the King of Scots “dois all this perfunctorie and that he could with tyme digest the worst, howsoevir that for the first he may peradventure kythe [show] him displeased with the mater.” It is possible that the English ministers, unable to tell the ambassadors what James had written with his own hand, and anxious to checkmate their “sharp” use of their instructions, invented the story of a secret correspondence. They may have wished to shield not only James, but also Douglas who, we know, was acquainted with all the secrets of the embassy, for Douglas had written to Davison, on January 15th, that “as ever the mater shalbe used” [whatever might happen], Gray and Melville “haif no commission to leawe [leave] matteris in ill termes”¹—a statement equivalent to an assurance that James would “digest the worst.” It was useless for the ambassadors to pretend that they were authorised to convey a threat.

Apart from these mysterious letters, there

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 245.

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was a traitor in the ambassadors' own camp besides Archibald Douglas. James had sent with them a certain Sir Alexander Stewart¹ who asserted that he was the bearer of a private communication from the King, and encouraged the belief that James was not really in earnest. In spite of the remonstrances of his colleagues, Stewart volunteered, or consented, to go to Scotland on Elizabeth's behalf, to discover what James really meant. The English queen also spoke of sending, on her own account, Thomas Randolph and Sir Henry Killigrew, two diplomats who had been much in Scotland. In these circumstances, Melville and Gray naturally decided to take their leave. They

¹ Courcelles, *Negotiations*, p. 31. Young in his letter speaks of "our own Sir Alexander Stewart." I am indebted to Mr. Beveridge, Rector of Linlithgow Academy, for references which provide a probable identification of Stewart with Sir Alexander Stewart, second son of Alexander Stewart, of Scotstounhill, (*Register of the Privy Seal*, October 24th, 1575, June 4th, 1583, December 16th, 1584, December 19th, 1584, April 19th, 1584/5; *Register of the Great Seal*, April 19th, 1588). Alexander Stewart, of Scotstounhill, had been Captain of Blackness in 1574 (*Register of the Great Seal*), and he or his son, afterwards Sir Alexander, had been a confederate of Archibald Douglas (*C. S. P.*, V., pp. 461-462; VI., p. 175).

Sir Alexander Stewart in 1590 offered his services to Elizabeth as an agent to the Prince of Parma, and Archibald Douglas gave him a qualified recommendation to Burghley as one likely to "prove but indifferent honest." He was killed in Edinburgh in a fray in February, 1593 (*Thorpe's Calendar of Scottish Papers*, Vol. II., pp. 579, 581, 596, 611, 624; *Calderwood's History*, V., pp. 223-224).

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requested Maitland to despatch orders for their immediate return, expecting that this official recall would meet them on their homeward way. They also asked that Elizabeth's envoys should be detained in Scotland until their own arrival. Young suggested to Maitland that all four envoys, Keith and Douglas, as well as Gray and Melville, should be recalled to "try all thair obediences." He was sure that Douglas would not obey the summons. Gray probably knew of this suggestion, for, in writing to James, he asked for a recall of the other three and for a separate "discharge or revocation" for Douglas, to be used at the latter's discretion. This recommendation, added as a postscript to Gray's letter—possibly after his colleagues had seen it—suggests that Gray, unlike Melville and Young, was again on friendly terms with Douglas, and there is evidence of this in the State Papers.¹

¹ At Gray's request, Douglas wrote to Davison to ask that Elizabeth should send "sum grave personnage and of contenance" to James, and gave his own opinion that this proceeding could "wyrk no great ill effectis." He added that Gray wished to prove to his colleagues that "he is not altogether discredited at her majesteis hand," and pleaded, on Gray's behalf, that it was not "expedient that ane man of gud desserving shuld perish wytheowt sum gretar cause than as zit is knawin against him." (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 245). The precise object of this letter is obscure, because it is dated January 22nd, and Elizabeth's suggestion of sending Randolph and Killigrew was known to the

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The five documents which describe these proceedings are letters, dated January 20th, from Melville to James and to Maitland; a letter, also dated January 20th, from Young to Maitland; a letter, dated January 21st, from Gray and Melville to James; and a letter of the last-mentioned date from Gray to James. Melville's letter to James and the joint-letter of Gray and Melville, have been printed (somewhat inaccurately) in Robertson's Appendix L. and copied in the *Papers of the Master of Gray*. The other three are published for the first time:—

Sir Robert Melville to the King.

LONDON,
20th January, 1587.

It maye plays your majeste sens the dyrectyoun of our former letters we had awdyence, and her majeste appearit to tak our owertours [overtures] in gud part in presens of her counsell, albeit no offers could tak place with [influence] theme, hawing tayne resolutyoun to proseyd with extremite;

Scottish ambassadors at least two days earlier. Its importance lies in the indication it gives of a change in the relations between Douglas and Gray, and of an attempt of the latter to ingratiate himself again with the English ministers. Soon after Gray's return to Scotland he was in secret correspondence with the English agents at Berwick, and precautions were taken for the safe conveyance of letters to him at a time when communications with England were being jealously watched by the Scottish Government (*Calendar of Border Papers*, I., No. 490).

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nochttheles it pleasit her majeste to dyssire ws staye fore two dayeis one [without] takyng our leyve ontyll scho had adwysit apone our propotytiouns, sens quhilk tyme her majeste is becwm moyr hard be swm [some] letters as we are informit hes cwm frome Scotland makand swm heyr to beleve that your majeste takys not this mater to hart, as we know the contrare in effect, and had of before removit the lyk opynioun out of her majestes mynd, quhilk be synister informatyoun wes credityt. Thyre [these] reports hes hynderyt [hindered] our commissyoun and abusit [deceived] this quene, fearyng in lyk maner we salbe stayeit [i.e. detained in London] ontyll answer cwm frome Scotland be syk parsouns [such persons] as theye hayf intelligens of, and albeit that it be weyll aneughe knawyne to all mene quhow heawelye [heavily] your majeste takys this prosedings to hart, the treughe is that theye hayf be this occasyoun so persuadit the quene that it is lyk to hynder our negotyatioun, as also Alcynour [Alexander] Stewart is to be dyrectyt in theye partys [i.e., sent to Scotland] bye [without] our knaulege [consent], quho hes awantyt [avaunted, boasted] moyr of his credit thene I beleve he maye parforme, and we willit [bade] hym desyst frome this dealing seyng it doys harme and he is not meyt [meet] fore that purpos, remittyng to your majestes gud dyscretioun to tak ordour heyreyne [herein] as we salbe ansourable to your majeste not to omit oneye [any] poynt we hayf in charge. As the treughe is, the mester of Grhaye hes behawit hym self weraye wpryghtlye and dyscretlye in this charge and ewill tayne with be [i.e., has offended] dyvers in thyre partys [i.e., England] quho war of before his frendis. We hayf beyne behalding to the menstrals [minstrels] quho hes borne ws best cumpane bot hes not beyne

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trublit with otheris.¹ Wilzeme Kethe hes left nothing wndone that he had in charge. As for mester Arschebald he hes promist at all tymes to do his dewoyr [devoir], quharyne [wherein] he sall fynd trew report mayd to your majeste. Crawyng pardoune of your majeste that I haif beyne so tedyus, efter I haif kyssit your majestes hand I humlye tak my leywe.

Praying God to grant your majeste moneye [many] gud dayes and happie, in quhos protectyoun I commit your majeste. At Loundoun the xx of Januar.

Sir, albeit mester George [Young] hes not beyne in commysoun he is not inferyour in his service to oneye of ws als weill be his gud adwys, and diligent kayr [care] he takys fore the advancement of your service, quharyne we haif not beyne ane lytill forderyt [helped].

be your majestes most humill sud[er]ect and servitour

S. ROBERT MELVILL.
[Holograph ; Vol. A, f. 181.]

Robert Melville to the Lord Secretary of Scotland.

LONDON,
20th January, 1587.

It maye pleis your lordship, we had awdyence the next daye efter the dyrectyoun of [sending] our last letters and wes better resavit of her majeste thene [than] before, quhayr we wes requyrit to propone our offers to the Cunsell. Albeit it profytit nothing seyng theye had tayne resolutyoun to proseyd be

¹ No hospitality seems to have been offered to the envoys.

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extremite against our soverans moder ; nocththeles her majeste appearit to fynd theme [*i.e.*, James's "offers"] reasonable and willit ws to staye two dayeis longer one [without] takkyng our leywe. Sens quhilk tyme we wnderstand scho is becwm moyr hard against our soverans moder apone wykked inventoryuns mayd of [about] hys maieste heyr and be intelligens resavit frome Scotland, far contrarye to hys majestes meanyng, that hys majeste takis not this proseding to hart accordyng as we haif gevyne fourthe [given forth]. In the meane tyme Alcynour Stewart is dyrectyt [sent] to hys majeste, as we art [are] informit be his awyn sut [request], takyng in hand forder thene he is able to parforme quhilk doys ewill and wald be tayne ordour with in kays he cwm [dealt with in the event of his coming] there [to Edinburgh]. I gave hym my adwys to forbear dealyng heyrin [herein] seyng it wes ower weyghtye fore hym to tak in hand ; quho promisit to desyst, quhowbeit I ame informit he intendis to pas fordward [*i.e.*, go to Scotland], wyssching that ordour sould be tayne heyrwith accordyng to his majestes honour and the weyghtynes of the caus. The treughe is, his majestes dyrectyoun hes beyne fallowit [followed] be ws in ewerylk poynt, and albeyt we hayf omittyt nothing therof, this malytyus inventoryuns be swm heyr and others frome thens [Scotland] hes put ws to gret trouble and fasscherye in doyng quhat theye cane to sclander his majeste and dyscredit ws. In the mentyme [Stewart] is wsyng all meanis to presuayd this quene that theye hayf sure intelligens frome theye partes [Scotland] and drywis [drives or urges] ws to haif it confermit. We haif to this present beyne moyr jentyll [gentle] and moderat in our propotytyouns thene our instructyouns berys [warrant] to the effect that no just occa-

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syoun of offens sould be consavit forder thene they myght gather be necessitye of ansouryng to syk heads as could not be omittyt ; quharat her majeste wes weraye [very] offendit apone our fyrst and secound awdyence, and thereafter become moyr jentyll ontyll [until] this new practys be syk [by such] as sutys [seeks] our soverans moders lyf hes movit her to beleyve thyre [these] sclanderus reportys that his majeste karys [cares] nothing of this prosedings bot will easelye dygest it. And albeyt the mater we hayf in hand be of gret importance noththeles thyre sclanderus inventoryouns of [about] his majeste be syk malytyus enemyes awowyt [avowed] to my self hes trublyt me als meykly as the other. I will forbeyr to truble your lordship forder heyrin till metyng fore dyvers respectys, houpyng we sall tak our leyve within two dayeis in kays we be not stayeit apone thyre practysis.¹ Therefore your lordship mone [must] caus this berar be haystit with all expedytyoune with ane warrand tyll ws till retourne, seyng [seeing] it maye be he fynd ws heyr albeyt I houpe he sall meyt ws be the waye. I ame informit James Matland sould be [has] returnit haym and geve [if] so be I beleyve he hes not resavit the hundrethe crowns I send hym [cf. *supra*, p. 143]. I cane not saye, bot sens our cumyng the Mester of Grhaye hes done his dewtye, and beyng ernist in this commissyoun myslykit of Mester Arschebald. Geve [If] he do as he promisynt I sall leave nothing onreportyt [without reporting it] to his majeste. Ye sall not be reprovit fore [for] mester George Young that he omittyt oneye part of his dewtye, quhome I hayf had gud helpe of, and his majeste ane effectyonat servand and kayrfull.

¹ Probably a reference to the charges against the French ambassador. But an accusation seems also to have been brought against Gray (cf. *infra*, p. 183).

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Wyllyme Kethe hes hym commendit to your lordship and my ladye your bedfallow ; quho hes behawit hymself dyscretlye. Remittying quhat I hayf neclectyt to other letters. With my hartlye commendatyouns to my ladye the Justyce Clark the prowdest with the pryour and Largo, I commit your lordship to the protectyoun of the Eternall. The xx of Januar at Loundoune.

Be your lordships to obeye,
S. ROBERT MELVILL.

There is ane of the commissyoners for the estayts of Flanders put in keping heyr apone dealing with the king of Denmark fore taking awaye of contrawerseys betuene the prence of Parme and theme quhylyk pakket wes takkyn and brouht hyther.

[*Holograph* : Vol. A, f. 171.]

George Young to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,
20th January, 1586-7.

PLEASE it your lordship our last audience quhilk was upoun the xv of this instant gave ws some better expectation of our earand nor we had of befoir, for that they [Gray and Melville] being desyrit to resume thair offres, the same apparit to be better lyked of be her majestie nor they were at the first. Quhairupoun taking her to be advisit with thame, some of the consale that were present began to storne, as mislyking altogether that her majestie sould have gevin eare to any thing tending to any alteration of the resolution teane [taken] be the parliament and thame. In this humour sa many as have bene spoken with apart continewis still, and we have ever since attendit on the consalis laisour [leisure] to heare ws

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in our offres, and can not have it to this hour. Sa that this efternone we have directit [sent] down to crave our leif.

The cheif thing we finde that hes movit and haistit thingis to this extremitie is the persuasion quhair in [in which] Scottis lettres postit daylie to this court continewis baith this quene and counsale, that his majestie dois all this perfunctorie and that he could with tyme digest the worst, howsoevir that for the first he may peraventure kythe [show] him displeased with the mater, and now we have to helpe this concept our awne Sir Alexander Stewart, quha notwithstanding all terrouris and dischargeis [prohibitions] gevin him be sic as sould have power to command his contrayman in thir partis [*i.e.*, the ambassadors], will nedis ga fordward to his majestie with the quenes letter and the erle of Leycesters, cairles quhat they can do or say; and as the Master affirmis to have tryit [proved], he hes gevin out that he knawes further of his hienes mynde in all thir materis, and he sall let thame understand it mair effectually at his returnyng. I speik with in [short of] that quhilk we heare he vantis [boasts], being sory in gude faith that he or any Scottisman sould outshute himselff sa farre in a mater quhilk God and all gude men about his majestie can beare his hienes gude recorde to be farre utherwayse, and quhilk I doubt not his majestie will let appeare mair clearelie quhen he or any uther cummis that earand. But leaving him to his awne rewarde and thankis, we understand that Mr. Randolphe and Mr. Killegrewe salbe directed in [sent] to sie gif they may brek his majestie, sa being that Sir Alexander speid not; and that in the meane tyme we sall attende heir [remain here] till word come from thame. In this we pray your lordship to let thair presence [audience] (gif they come) be dilayit till we be

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there; and to that effect in cace we come nocht speid in our leve taking at our next audience, to let ane letter be directed to ws to call ws bak agane with expeditioun; quhilk, gif it be accordit, it salbe gude it be directed on the bak to all the four, that it may try all thair obediences. I have nocht as yit delyverit your lordshipis letter to the secretar, awayting upoun the event of our negotiation, lest utherwayse my dealing with him sould be sinisterly interpreted be some amangis our selffis jaloux of your intelligence, [*i.e.*, jealous of Maitland's correspondence with Walsingham]. Yit I am to delyver it before I come away.¹ The Lord preserve your lordship and grant yow and My Lady your bed-fallow your honest hartis desyris. From London this xx of Januer, 1586.

Your lordshipis humble servant,
M. G. YOUNG.

[*Holograph*; Vol. A, f. 176.]

Master of Gray and Sir Robert Melville to the King.

LONDON,
21st January, 1586-7.

PLEASE it your majestie in the last audience we had sen [since] our advertisement be Williame Murray, we fand her majestie at the resumyng of our offres something mitigated and inclyned to considder mair depelie of thame before we gat our leve. At our reasonyng certane of the consale namelie my lord of Leycester, Sir Christophere Haton, my lord Hunsdon and my lord Hawart [Howard] being present in the chamber gave litle shawe of any great

¹ There is no evidence in the English State Papers of the delivery of this letter.

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contentement to heare her from her former resolution [decided state of mind] now cassin in perplexitie quhat sho sould do. Alwayis we left her in that state, and since have daylie preissit conference with the haille counsaile, quhilk to this hour we have not yit obtenit. This day we have sent doun to crave our leve. The greatest hinder quhilk our negotiatioun hes found hithertils is a persuasioun they have heir that ather your majestie dealis superficiellie in this mater or that with tyme ye may be movit to digest it. Quhilk quhen with great difficultie we had expugnit [disproved], we finde anewe that certane letters written to thame of late from Scotland hes found some place of credite with thame in our contrare, sa that resolving now to cleare thame of that doubt be a speciall message they have maid chois of Sir Alexander Stewart to try your hienes meanyng in it and to persuade your majestie to lyke of [approve] thair procedingis, quhairfra na terrour we can lay out unto him is able to divert him. He hes gevin out that he hes credite with your majestie, and that he doubtis not to helpe this mater at your hienes hand. Gif he come there that earand we think your majestie will nocht owersie [overlook] the great disgrace that his attempt sall give ws heir, gif he be not tane ordour with before that he be further hard. And gif swa be that any uther be directed (as our intelligence gevis ws there sall) our humble sute is to your majestie that it may please yowr hienes to heare of ws quhat we finde heir, and at quhat point we leve this mater with her majestie before that they finde audience, [*i.e.*, to delay giving audience to any ambassadors that Elizabeth might send until he had heard their own report]. The caussis quhair of remitting to our privat letters, we commit your majestie for the present to Goddis eternall

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protection. From Londoun this xxj of Januer 1586.

Your Majesteis maist humble and maist obedient subjectis and servitouris,

MR. OF GRAY.

S. ROBERT MELVILL.

[*Autograph signatures* ; Vol. A, f. 180.]

The Master of Gray to James VI.

LONDON,

21st January, 1586-7.

PLEASE your Majestie, at our coming hither at the first we fand, as we wrot of befor, the hard dealing towardis the Quene your mother to proceid cheifly of that sune of your awin (at least professing them selfis so to be) haid, verie fare [far] to your Majesties disadvantage, givein it furthe that all your dealing wes superficiall and *pro forma scholæ*, so that it wes a maiter you should verie weil disgeist oneis [once] being done. With great paine we pat them afe that opinion, quhairby at the audience we haid since we wrot our last letter, we fand a great chainge and calmnes in hir Majestie, witche [which] pat us in great hoype, and gave us no small confort ; and in deid I know hir holl Counselours thocht we haid moveit hir to fere [fear]. Now of lait sune in Scotland, I must say, hes not usit you weil, for within thir thre dayis (I am advertisit yesternicht be a gentleman who saw them) thay heir heve resaveit letters from Scotland affirming all wes said of befor, that your Majestie takis no caire of this maiter, and that ye haid forgot ellis that ever ye send us away, and that our coming wes rather a maiter procurit, then proceiding from your Majestie [*i.e.*, that James had been forced to send them]. So that they micht asssure them selfis heir, wer the maiter oneis [once] done, it would soun

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be forgot. To help this maiter a wyse gentleman, Sir Alexander Steuart, hes takin on hand to the Quene and the Earle of Leicester that he shall mitigat your Majestie, let them use quhat rigour they please ; affirming him to possese your Majesties eare best of any other, and that this hardnes procedis only for [this opposition arises only from the circumstance] that your Majestie and this Quene understandis not other so weil as he hes takin on hand be him ye shall heirefter. This maiter he opinit to Sir Robert and me, and we schew him that we could not stand content that any your Majesties subjects should presume to tak any commission, we being heir your Majesties embassadours. He schew us that it wes a thing the Quene haid burdinit him with, bot he would do no thing in it bot be [except by] our advyse. Notwithstanding since, we understand the maiter to have procedit from him self, and he gois fordwart in it to the great hinder of our negociation. Therfor, I pray your Majestie give [if] he come to you with any sutche maitter, to tak sutche ordour with him, as the attempt demerittis, and as your Majestie would have all theis opinionones to ceasse. Lyk wayis the Quene heir and hir Counsell ar deliberat to send one in Scotland befor our coming ; if so be, it is meitest your Majestie acknowledge him not til our retourne ; for, as we can learne, they of this Counsell meinis to persuade thair Quene to tak your mothers blood be sutche advertismentis as thay have alredy receavit from Scotland, and ar to receive, and myndis to mak us linger heir til they may have fresche advertisment.¹

¹ The meaning is that Elizabeth's Council were convinced by reports from Scotland that James did not really care and had undertaken to satisfy her by obtaining a confirmation of their view, Gray and Melville being detained in London to prevent their influencing James.

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Bot we have send this day to crave audience, and to tak our leive ; for that haveing craveit conference of the Counsellours, we find bot deleyis [only a fresh excuse for delay in allowing them to go].

Bot we hoype not for it [leave to go] til they get advertisment bothe from France and Scotland. And if advertismentis keipt it from them [*i.e.*, if they fail to get an assurance of James's indifference], from among their selves, we can not bot hoype weil of this maiter, knowing perfytylly the Quene not to be resolvit of hir self, and that all the Counsellours sche hes can not yit persuad hir, albeit in deid they ar all verie extreme in this, for yisterday I spak with my Lord Leicester in privat, bot fand no thing in this maiter bot rigour ; Marie, touthching yourself he utterit sindry good speatches. So fare as we can learne in this maiter, my Lord Bourgley is most temperat of all the Counsellours. If it be not spilt be sic [spoilt by such] bothe thair and heir, who lovis not the Quene your Majesties mother, we hoype yit weil of it, and shalbe ansuerable that Sir Robert, William Keythe and my self shall leave no thing undone that may tend to your Majesties weil, honour and contentment. If we get not a full grant of hir savetie, we are to crave a supercedere for some monethis, witche I luk for, if, as said is, knaifrie dealing spill it not. In dyversis playis and commedies in publict thay have brocht your mother in a rope to the Quene of England in derision, wherof we mynd to compleine. So reserving sume forder to the berar, I pray God continou your Majestie in prosperous estait. From Londoun, this 21 of January 1586.

I pray your Majestie direct bak this berar with all diligence with a revocation for us thre and a dis-

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chaarge or revocation to Mr. Archibald a pairt, to use as he minister occasion.

Your Majesties most heumble subject and serviteur

MR. OF GRAY.

[*Holograph* : Vol. C ; printed in Miss Warrender's *Illustrations*.]

In his personal letter to James, Gray mentioned that the ambassadors had found Leicester unrelenting, and the Earl sent by Gray a categorical refusal to make any plea for Mary's life. The letter, here published for the first time, is holograph and is dated January 23rd :—

Earl of Leicester to James VI.

23rd January, 1587.

I WAS bold of late to write at some length to your Majestie, but I think the messenger wyll not make over much haste by reason of the rest of his company. I trust your Majestie wyll bear with my boldnes, seing yt ys partlye thorowe your owen commande. And albeyt yt lyeth not in me to performe that which yt pleased your Majestie to requyre by your letters, as also by your embassators, I besech you consider I am before all worldly things to doe the faythfull offyce of a trew counsellor and servant to the Queen my Sufyrayne, whose cace yt ys so nere, as I shuld hardly discharge my dewtye yf I shuld any way take but that cource which all her most faythfull counsellors doe advyse. And having

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declarytt my full mynd to the berar the Mr. Grey, your Majesties loyall servant, I may not over bolden my self to trowble your Majestie overlong, nor distrust the credytt of the gentleman for his report to your Majestie, whome I pray God long to preserve and kepe.

And so I humbly kyss your royall handis. At the Court, this 23 of January.

Your Majesties most humble in all lawfull service

R. LEICESTER.

[Vol. C ; printed in Miss Warrender's *Illustrations*.]

Courcelles describes the impression made when the ambassadors' letters reached Edinburgh. He says that the ambassadors reported that Elizabeth "thought they had not so exprese charge to oppose them selves againste the executione ; whereof she was assured, as well by that was written unto her and some of her counsell, and some neere about her ; as also by that [which] Alexander Stuard had delivered unto her in his name, whom the Kinge had sent in theire company, with more exprese and secrete charge then they had ; for he had said from the Kinge, that only because he would not shewe him self to neclecte his Mother, and the dutie he owes her, he was faine to sende ambassadores, who had charge

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to deale as they sawe was for his honore and reputacon, which he prayed her not to take in ill parte ; referring it to her and her counsell, to proceed notwithstandinge, as they sawe cause. Stuard added, were she once deade, yf the Kinge at first shewed him selfe not contented therwith, they might easely satisfy him, in sending him doges and deare. That upon this uncertentie of propositiones, the Queene and her counsell were resolved to send Randle and Killegrew, to induce the Kinge to that [which] Stuard had tauld them ; and seele¹ his disposition to revenge, yf she should be executed : but firste it was thought meete to send Stuard, to prepare the waye. Wherwith the Kinge was in marvilose collore [choler], and sware and protested befor God, that yf Stuard came, he would hange him before he putt of his bootes ; and yf the Queene medled with his Motheris life, she should knowe, hee would followe somewhat else then dogges and deare.”²

Stewart did come, but James did not hang him. It was reported in February that “the King dislikes Sir Alexander Stewart’s dealing

¹ A metaphor from hawking. To seel is to stitch up the eyelids of a hawk, hence to hoodwink.

² Courcelles, *Negotiations*, pp. 31-32.

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and is highly offended with him,” but, at the end of the same month Courcelles reported that James had come to “digest” patiently “that which passed betweene the Queene of England and Alexander Stuard ; whose excuse he hath well allowed, and useth the man as well as before.”¹

Courcelles’ description is only a slight exaggeration of the actual words of the ambassadors, and it was probably based upon accounts given verbally by their messengers. James knew that Elizabeth believed that, as far as he was concerned, she could take his mother’s life with impunity, and he cannot have failed to realise that her confidence was based upon his own letter to Leicester. “My honour constrainis me to insist for her life,” he had written to Leicester, and his own words had come back to him. There was still time. His ambassadors had reported that Elizabeth showed signs of relenting, and a definite statement from James that he would regard his mother’s execution as an unfriendly act would have changed the whole situation.

He wrote to Elizabeth on January 26th, dis-

¹ C. S. P., IX., pp. 275-276 ; Courcelles, p. 37.

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avowing Stewart. "In caice any do vaunt thaime selfis to know further of my mynde in this matter then my ambassadouris do, quho indeid are fullie aquented thairvith, I pray you not to takk me to be a cameleon, but by the contraire, thaime to be maliciouse impostouris as suirlye thay are." Having said so much, he ought to have said quite clearly what he meant his ambassadors to convey to her. He wrote what he calls a "ruide and longsum lettir." He described his own agitation of mind, begged Elizabeth not to take his plainness ill as she had done on a former occasion, and appealed once more to her not to lay hands upon a sovereign princess. What law of God, he asked, could permit that justice should "strikke upon" those whom He had appointed supreme dispensers of justice under Him, those who, as His immediate lieutenants, could not be judged even by their equals on earth? God would avenge the defiling of His own anointing. This appeal to caste feeling among sovereigns was accompanied by an application of Cicero's distinction between *utile* and *honestum*, and by a petition to send his ambassadors home with a comfortable answer, such as it became her to

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give and such as his love and sincerity towards her deserved to receive.

Elizabeth's interest in James's oratory lay in discovering if he intended to confirm the threats at which Gray and Melville had hinted when they tried to use the "rigour" of their instructions. Twice in the letter James began what might have developed into a threat. He told Elizabeth of his alarm about what might follow his mother's execution, and of his fears as to what his subjects might compel him to do, and his sentence might well have ended by suggesting that he could not guarantee the preservation of peace if his subjects should bring pressure upon him to break the League with England. But it actually ended with an appeal for pity—if Elizabeth knew all this, he was sure she would pity him and help him out of his difficulty. In a later passage, James again approached a threat. He told Elizabeth that it would redound to her honour if she would "spaire quhen it is least lookid for"; mercy thus exercised would place himself and all the other princes of Europe eternally in her debt. It would be wise for her to do so rather than "appardon I pray you my free speaking, to putt princes to straittis of honour

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quhair throuch youre generall reputatione and the universall—allmost—mislyking of you may daingerouslie perrell both in honour and utillitie youre persoune and estate." The words were rude enough, but Elizabeth must have smiled as she recognised in "allmost" a happy after-thought of her only friend in Europe, and the conclusion of the sentence was welcome for the absence of a threat. If Mary died by Elizabeth's hand, princes would be put to straits of honour, and this unfortunate circumstance might combine with her general unpopularity to produce some possible peril. The prince who wrote these words and, in the next sentence, was deep in the distinction between *utile* and *honestum* might safely be left in his straits of honour. James still preferred his title to his mother. We cannot be sure whether he had given private instructions to Sir Alexander Stewart or not—his treatment of Stewart suggests that he had—but there can be no doubt that he deliberately gave Elizabeth to understand, as his communications with Leicester had implied, that, though he would deeply resent his mother's execution, he was not prepared to take offensive action to avenge it.

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The letter is here reprinted from the *Calendar of Scottish Papers*¹ :—

James VI. to Elizabeth.

HOLYROODHOUSE,

26th January, 1587.

MADAME and dearest sister, if ye could have knouin quhat divers thochtis have agitat my mynde since my directing of Williame Keith unto you for the sollisting of this matter quhairto nature and honoure so greatly and unfeynedly bindis and obleisses [obliges] me, if I say ye kneu quhat dyveris thochtis I have bene in and quhat just greif I hadd veyng [weighing] the thing itself if so it shoulde proceide, as Godd forbid, quhat eventis micht follou thair-upon, quhat number of straitis I volde be drevin unto and amongst the rest hou it micht perrell my reputation amongst my subjectis if thaise thingis I yett say againe vayre [were] knouin unto you, then I vot but ye wold so farr pittie my cace as it volde easely mak you at the first to solve youre ouin best intoit.² I doubt greatlie in quhat facon to vritt in

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 247–248. It seems to have reached Douglas on February 2nd, after Elizabeth had signed the death-warrant, and six days before the execution (*Ibid.*, pp. 264–265).

² The original letter (*Brit. Mus. Cott. Calig. C.*, ix, f. 192) has been damaged, the right-hand side of the two folios being torn. The sentence printed as above in *C. S. P.*, IX., ends thus in the original—"then [torn] I not but ye wold so farr pittie my cace as it uolde easely mak you at the first to [torn] solve youre ouin best into it." A copy in late sixteenth or early seventeenth century handwriting, made, apparently, while the original was still intact, inserts "doubt" between "then," and "I," and reads "resolve" where the second gap occurs. It also inserts "minde" after "ouin," but this is an interpolation, the words "youre ouin best" occurring in the middle of a line. The meaning seems to be that pity for James would lead Elizabeth to do her best to help him out of his difficulty

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this purpois for ye have allreaddie takin sa evill with my playnness as I feare if I shall persist in that course ye shall rather be exasperattit to passions in reading the vordis then by the plainness thair of be persuadit to consider richtlie the simpill treuth. Yett justlie prefferring the deutie of ane honest freind to the suddaine passionis of one quho hou soone thay be past can vyslier vey [wiselier weigh] the reasons then I cann sett thaim doune, I have resolid in feu vordis and plaine, to gif you my freindly and best advyce, appealing to youre rypest judgement to discerne thairupon. Quhat thing, madame, can greatlier touche me in honoure, that both is a King and a sonne, then that my nearest neihboure being in straittest freindshippe with me shall rigouruslie putt to death a free soveraigne prince and my naturall mother, alyke in estaite and sex to hir that so uses her, albeit subject I grant to a harder fortune, and touching hir nearlie in proximitie of bloode? Quhat lau of Godd can permitt that justice shall strikke upon thaim quhom he hes appointid supream dispensaturis of the same, under Him, quhom He hath callid Goddis, and thairfore subjectid to the censure of none in earth, quhose anointing by Godd can not be defylid be man unrevenged by the authore thair of, quho being supreme and immediatt lieutenant of Godd in heaven cannot thairfore be judgit by thair equallis in earth?

Quhat monstrous thinge is it that soveraigne princes thaim selfis shoulde be the exemple giveris of thaire ouen sacred diademes' prophaining? Then quhat shoulde move you to this forme of proceeding—supponin the vorst quhiche in goode faith I looke not for at youre handis—honoure or profite? Honoure vaire [were] it to you to spaire quhen it is

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least lookid for, honoure vaire it to you—quhiche is not onlie my freindlie advyce but my earnist suite—to take me and all other princes in Europe eternally beholdin unto you in granting this my so reasonable request, and not—appardon I pray you my free speaking—to putt princes to straittis of honoure quhair through youre generall reputaione and the universall—allmost—mislyking of you may daingerouslie perrell both in honour and utilitie youre persoune and estate.

Ye knou, madame, vell aneuch hou small difference Cicero concludis to be betuixt *utile* and *honestum*, in his discourse thair of, and quhiche of thaim oucht to be framed to the other, and nou madame, to conlude, I pray you so to vey thir feu [weigh these few] argumentis that as I ever presumed of youre nature, so the quhole vorlde may praise youre subjectis for thaire deutifull caire for youre preservation and youre self for youre princelie pittie, tho doing quhair of onlie belangis unto you, the performing quhair of onlie apparteynis unto you, and the praise thair of onlie will ever be youris. Respect then, my goode sister this my first so long contineuid and so earnist request, dispatching my ambassadouris vith suche a comfortable ansoure as may become youre persone to give, and as my loving and honest hairt unto you merit to resave. But in caice any do vaunt thaim selfis to know further of my mynde in this matter then my ambassadouris do, quho indeid are fullie aquented thairvith, I pray you not to takk me to be a cameleon, but by the contraire, thaim to be maliciouse impostouris as suirly thay ar. And thus praying you hairtly to excuse my ruide and longsum lettir, I comitt you, madame, and dearest sister to the blessid protection of the most Hie, quho mott give you grace so to resolve in this maitter as

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may be most honorabill for you, and most acceptable to Him. From my palless of Holyrudhouse.

Youre most loving and affectionat brother and cousin,

JAMES R.

[*Holograph.*]

We have very little knowledge about the last days spent by the ambassadors in London. A report sent by Châteauneuf to Henry III., in February, asserts that a gentleman of the English court, often employed on important affairs, called upon Gray and inquired whether, if Elizabeth spared Mary's life at James's request and her own life was again endangered by Mary, James would undertake to renounce his claim to the succession, and that Gray refused to consider the suggestion, asked whether his visitor was authorised to make it, and was told that it was merely an inquiry in the course of conversation ("par forme de devis"). The story may be true, for the French and Scottish ambassadors were in frequent communication, but it is most improbable that the English Government had any knowledge of the matter, at all events as a serious proposition. We possess only a French account of the final interview with Elizabeth. It asserts that the Scottish envoys were accused

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of designs against the Queen's life because Gray had sent one of his followers with a gift of pistols to a friend.¹ The final letter from the envoys themselves was written by Gray to Maitland on January 29th; it is in bad preservation and adds little to the information given in the last series of letters. It is here printed from the *Warrender MSS.* :—

Master of Gray to the Lord Secretary.

LONDON,

29th January, 1586-7.

MY LORD, ve lukit at the last despetche [we expected when we sent our last letter] to have takin our leive bot since ve have found a great calmnes in the quene and the counselours moveit with it. Yit vithin theis thre dayis they have takin occasion upon some letters send hither from amongst yourselfis in that country to animat the quene to crueltie saying that the King vil pass [overlook] the maiter. As your lordship may see bothe be my letter to his majestie and Sir Robertis lykvayis now they mynd to send in Scotland for freche intelligence, and as your lordship may see ar proposit for this effect to imploy Sir Alexander Steuart vho hes takin . . . one hand as he and I bothe may performe . . . thairfor I pray your lordship for the kingis reputation that [order?] be takin vith him, as ye vould vische the veil [wish the weal] of our negotiation. It is thocht heir

¹ A. Teulet : *Relations Politiques de La France et de l'Espagne avec L'Écosse au XVI^e siècle*, IV., pp. 166-167. Cf. *supra*, p. 164.

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that one is to be directit or a couple to Scotland befor our retourne; if so fallis furthe I pray your lordship that they see not the king til ve retourne, for ve ar informit they mynd to mak vs linger heir till they receave vord bothe from France and Scotland. Bot ve ar to crave audience tomorou, yet hoypeis not to get it. Ve should learn . . . with the counselours this day bot ve find . . . I pray you cause be all moyens possible . . . to stey advertismentis from that coun-try and ve yit le[ive in] hoype, the quene herself not being resolvit, that good may be done, at least for continouation [delay]: great straitnes [severity] ve find heir in counselours. Thair is sure advertisment come from Spaine that the King of Spaine myndis this Spring one [on] this quenis dominions. Bot for that I dare not vryt all I vould. The bearer wil schau your lordship all uther thingis. So I commit your lordship to God. From Loundoun this 29 of Januar 1586.

Your lordshipis to commaund,

MR. OF GRAY.

I think men fand never harder dealing then ve find aluayis. I pray your lordship remember his majestie that ve ar heir at great chairgis, and that Vm. Keythe hes bein long heir.

My Lord retourne the berar vith all expeditioun vith our renvation [recall] and Mr. Arch. Douglassis a pairt to use as ye find him deserve.

[*Holograph*; Vol. A, f. 178.]

Gray, Melville, and Keith reached Edinburgh before February 8th, when they attended a meeting of the Privy Council and were thanked for their services.¹ Young appears to

¹ *Privy Council Register*, IV., p. 144.

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have accompanied them, for Walsingham sent with him a letter to Maitland, written on January 27th, and here printed for the first time from the *Warrender Papers*. The signature is autograph:—

Walsingham to Maitland.

LONDON,

27th January, 1586-7.

SIR, I was vearly sorrie that throughe my absence from the Coorte I coulde not procuer unto your kindseman and frende and my old acquaintance Mr. Roberte Melvill, so good usage heere, as bothe you required and as the gentleman himselfe hathe, accordinge to your reporte, merited, havinge allwaies yealded a thanckefull acknowledgement of her majestes grace and favour procured unto him, in the time of extremetie, when he stode in harde tearmes with that governemente; I desired my frende Mr. Secretary Davison, in my absence, to acquainte her majestie with the testimonie you give of the gentleman, and if the same hathe not wrought that good effecte that you desier, I prairie you, Sir, ascribe it unto the unpleasatenes of the matter committed to his chardge and the Mr. of Grey. Besides to be plaine with you, suche as are noted to stande anie waie affected unto the king your Soveraignes mother (beinge knowen to be so greate an enemie bothe to religion, and to the Queenes majestie our Soveraigne), are in no sorte liked of heere by suche as are knowne to be either religious towardses God, or dutifully affected towardses her majestie as I have more particulerly declared unto this bearer my good frende Mr. George Yonge, to

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whose reporte I refer you. And so I commit you to God. From my house in London the 27th of January, 1586.

Your lordshipis most assured frend to

commaund

FRA. WALSYNGHAM.

[Vol. A, f. 236.]

The apology was a poor one, and Melville had ground for resentment, as, indeed, had all the ambassadors except Douglas. Gray (*supra*, p. 148) quoted one of the insults which Elizabeth addressed to him, and Melville, writing at the same time (*supra*, p. 138), remarked that her "hard speechis wer dressit to my self." Châteauneuf, in the report already quoted (*supra*, p. 182) says that Elizabeth was specially rude to Melville because she believed him to have instigated James to take offence at the treatment of his mother, and a writer in the *Spanish Papers* asserts that at the closing interview Elizabeth told Melville that "if she had a councillor who gave her such advice as he gave the King of Scotland, she would have his head off, to which he replied that if he were her councillor he would rather lose his head than fail to give her such advice."¹

¹ *Spanish Papers*, February 12th, 1587. The advice was to "break" with England in the confidence that he "would have the support of all princes in so just a cause."

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Douglas, who made insinuations against his colleagues, and accused them of trying "to bring thayr dealing presente to produce the vorse effectis they can heireftir," was nevertheless alarmed by the treatment they received, and suggested to Davison that they might induce James to retaliate upon future English ambassadors, and that it would be wise for Elizabeth either to deal favourably with them in England or to send an ambassador to Scotland before their return.¹

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 239, 244-245.

CHAPTER VI

JAMES AND ELIZABETH

WITH the departure of the envoys, the new information given in the *Warrender Papers* comes to an end. The events of the week after they left London have been the subject of much controversy. On February 1st, the Queen gave Davison the death-warrant, with instructions to send it at once to the Chancery to pass under the Great Seal, but "as secretly as myghte be, leste the devulgyng thearof befoare the executyon myghte . . . encrease hir daunger." She made some jokes about it, but betrayed her real feeling by instructing Davison to write to Mary's gaolers, Sir Amyas Paulet and Sir Drew Drury, to discover if they would ease her "of this burdene." Davison assured her that the gaolers would not put Mary to death without warrant, but despatched the letter. Paulet replied "offeringe his lyfe and all he had to be disposed at hir pleasure, but absolutly refusynge to be an instrumente in any suche actyone as was not warranted in

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honor and justyce," and Elizabeth complained of the "nicenes of thos precis fellowes" and threatened to find others who would "undertake it."¹ Meanwhile, Davison had summoned a private meeting of councillors, and they, without informing Elizabeth, sent Robert Beale, the secretary of the Council, to Fotheringay with the warrant. On Tuesday, February 7th, Elizabeth told Davison that it was a shame to her ministers that Mary still lived, and "mad some mention to have letters written to Sir Amyas Pawlete for the hastyng" of the execution, but Davison, knowing that orders had already been sent, replied that this

¹ Discourse by Mr. William Davison, *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 287-295. The authenticity of the letters which passed between Davison and Paulet (first published in 1722) was questioned by the late Professor E. S. Beesly in his *Queen Elizabeth* in the *Twelve English Statesmen* series (pp. 186-187). Professor Beesly distinguished between a "private murder" and "a public execution without delivery of the warrant," and attempted to defend Elizabeth from the charge of inciting to the former. But to take Mary's life without warrant would have been neither more nor less than a "private murder," as Paulet and Drury, and Elizabeth herself, well knew. The story rests not upon the letters but upon the solemn statements of Davison made in his own defence, and it finds some corroboration in a letter to him from Paulet, written on February 8th, thanking him for his treatment of the writer's "malapertnes," and adding, "If I should say that I have burned the papers you wrote of, I cannot tell if everybody would believe me, and therefore I reserve them to be delivered to your own hands at my coming to London" (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 269). There can be no doubt that Elizabeth did instigate the gaolers to put Mary to death without warrant.

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was unnecessary "the warrante beinge so generall and sufficyente as it was."¹ After this interview, at which Elizabeth told him to hasten the execution, Davison never saw the Queen again. Mary was beheaded in the hall² of Fotheringay Castle on the morning of Wednesday, February 8th. That night the news reached London, and Davison was advised to absent himself from court. The circumstance that he had not asked for a definite authorisation from Elizabeth for the despatch of the warrant gave her a pretext for making him a scapegoat. It was in vain that he pleaded that, two days after the warrant was signed, the Queen had, with a solemn oath, insisted that she maintained her resolution to "goe throughe with the sayd execusyon." Technically, he was in the wrong; he was dismissed, fined, and imprisoned, and Elizabeth also showed her displeasure towards Burghley and Walsingham, who shared his responsibility.

James did not learn of his mother's death until Roger Ashton brought the news, about

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 292-293.

² Elizabeth herself chose the hall as the scene of the execution, "mislykynge the courte or greene of the castle for dyveres respectes she alledged" (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 288).

James and Elizabeth

February 14th. The accounts of his behaviour are conflicting. Ogilvie of Powrie, a Scotsman in English pay, who had been with Gray in London, reported to Archibald Douglas that "the King moved never his countenance at the rehearsal of his mother's execution, nor leaves not his pastime and hunting more than of before."¹ Calderwood asserts that "when the king heard of the executioun, he could not conceale his inward joy, howbeit outwardlie he seemed to be sorrowfull. Yea, Chancellor Matlane was so ashamed of his behaviour that night, that he caused ish the chamber [made the courtiers issue or go out], that there might be few or no spectators. He said that night to some few that were beside him, 'I am now sole king.'"² On the other hand, an English spy reported that James not only took the news "very grievously and offensively, but also gave out in secret speeches that he could not digest the same or leave it unrevenged,"³ and he seems to have behaved with due regard to decency.

Elizabeth sent her excuses by Robert Carey,

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, XIII., p. 334.

² Calderwood's *History*, IV., p. 611. Calderwood was a boy of about eleven at the time.

³ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 300.

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afterwards first Earl of Monmouth, whose father, Lord Hunsdon, was her first cousin, through her mother, Anne Boleyn. Young Carey had gained James's favour when he accompanied Walsingham to Scotland in 1583, and had been invited to revisit the Scottish Court on an occasion when (according to Courcelles) Elizabeth annoyed James by sending, instead of her handsome young cousin, "olde dotinge Randalle [Randolph]." ¹ In March, 1603, Carey, after a long-remembered three days on horseback, bore to James the earliest tidings of Elizabeth's death.

On Sunday, February 19th, Carey sent, from Berwick, a request for permission to enter Scotland as the envoy of the Queen of England. Mr. George Young, Clerk of the Secret Council, came in person to Berwick, on Wednesday, the 22nd, to announce that James would give no reply until he had official information as to whether his mother was alive or dead. Carey told him the truth, and Young returned to Edinburgh. He was at Berwick again on the 25th, and informed Carey that his master "was not to receave any straingers at this tyme," but would accept any letters

¹ Courcelles, p. 41.

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from her Majesty and would send two councillors to Foulden (near Berwick) to confer with the envoy. Carey replied that he had instructions to deliver letter and message only to the King himself.¹ There was a deadlock. On March 6, an English agent despatched by Carey to Scotland, obtained a further explanation that "as yet the King would receive no ambassador, partly by reason of his heaviness and sorrowing for his mother, and also for that he is not resolved that the Queen is as sorry for his mother's death as he was informed she was, and further because he cannot stay the rigour of his people, being wickedly bent and evilly given."² On March 10th, James himself, replying to expostulations from Lord Hunsdon, insisted that he had not declined to receive letter and message "although by intermediate persons." It would not be just to "refuse to admit a trial" or to "condemn a person unheard." The words were obviously intended to annoy Elizabeth, and James added: "As for any proofs she has given of her innocency yet, we remit it to her own judgment whether she has yet satisfied

¹ *Calendar of Border Papers*, I., No. 490.

² *Border Papers*, I., No. 495; *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 330-331.

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the world to her honour in that matter, or not."¹

When James wrote, a meeting at Foulden, on March 14th, had already been arranged, and one of the two Scottish representatives was Sir Robert Melville.² The letter which Carey presented has long been known; it is here printed from a copy in the *Warrender Papers*:—

Queen Elizabeth to King James.

14th February, 1587.

MY DEIR BROTHER I wold yow knew, though not felt, the extreme dolour that owerwhelmeth my mynd for that miserable accident which farre contrary to my meening hath bene befallen. I have now sent this kinsmane of myne who er now it hath pleased yow to favour, to instruct yow treuly of that which is to irksome for my penne to tell yow. I besech yow that as God and many mo knowes how innocent I ame in this case, so yow will belewe me that if I had bidden doe it I wold have abyden by it. I ame not so base mynded that feare of any lyving creature or Prince should mak me afraide to doe that were in [*sic*] just, or done, to deny the same. I ame not of so base a lignage nor carry so vyle a mynd; but as not to disgiess fits most a king, so will I never dissemble my actions, but cause theme shew evin as I meane theme. This assuring yourself of me that as I

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 331–332. Though Elizabeth's letter had not yet been formally presented, its contents had probably become known unofficially to James.

² *Border Papers*, I., No. 497.

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knowe this was deserved, yit, if I had ment it, I wold never lay it one others shouderis, no moir will I not damnify my self that thought it not. The circumstances it may please yow to heare of this bearer. And for your part, think yow have not in the world a moir loving kinswoman nor moir deir freind, nor any that will vatch moir cairfully to preserve yow and your state, and whosoever should utherwise persuade yow, judge them moir partiall to otheris then yow. And thus in hast I leave to truble yow, beseching God to send yow a long raigne.

Your most assured loving Sisster and Cousine,
[*Unsigned*; Vol. A, f. 240.]

Along with this letter, Carey sent a written statement¹—the account which Elizabeth wished to be accepted by the world at large, and by James in particular:—

Written statement of Robert Carey's credit.

THE QUENES Majestie my mistris made choice of me to send unto your Majestie to declare unto yow a certane trueth of the putting downe of the Quene your mother, howe and in what sorte yt was, without her knowledge, or consent of mynd, unhapely performed, and her innocency therin. I have bene by your Majestis plesure denyed your presence which I did certyfie to the Quene my Mistris. But she, willingly desyrous to have yow certyfyed aright, sent me present commandement that I should (if not

¹ *Warrender Papers*, Vol. A, f. 241. A shortened form was printed by Spottiswoode, *History of the Church of Scotland*, Book VI., pp. 358–359, in edition of 1677.

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come in your presence) delyver my message and letters to two of your counsaile (if that were your pleasur so to be advertised). And having this opportunitie to make yt knowne unto your Majestie, I thought yt my best to delyver yt thus in wryting that by such meanes no words may be mistaken, but my dewty and charge commytted unto me, performed.

First, then, she commanded me to assure your Majestie that she never had thought to put the Quene your mother to death ; no, not althoughe the daily perswasions of her counsall wearyed her eares contynually with these unpleasant speeches, the nobilitie, knights and gentlemen, with prayers, supplicationes, and incessant sute urging her therunto. And the howerly owtcryes which her poore people and commynalty mad were such, that she was wearyed with all and greaved at the hart, to see all there determynationes.

Besides this, she commanded mee to declare unto your Majestie that she had thes new occasiones to move her mynd to ther mindis, bot yit they had no force to alter her determinatione which was still to preserve the Quene your mothers lyffe. First then, of late she had neues every day booth out of Spaign and France, of shippes and men preparing for the overthrowe of her Majestie and the delyverrie of your mother.

Secondly, by some seditiouse and discontented persones were gyven owt in divers parts of her Realme and in her owne court, reports of men landing in sundrie parts therof. And of such force were there intelligences as that yt moved her people to disquiet in such sort, that some adoe ther was to appease theme.

Lastly, a six dayes after thes rumors ther was

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newe reports gyven owt, howe that Fotheringham was broken open and the Quene escaped awaye.

Thes reports were of force, to bread jelosie in her Majestis head and to suspect the worse. Wherupone, because that in ane extremitie she wold not be unprovdyed of a remedy, she commanded a warrant to be made, which warrant was to give leave to her counsall to doe with the Quene your mother what they thought best. The warrant being made, seald and sighned, she delyvered yt to her Secretary, Mr. Davisone to kepe, mynding that if ther should any reskewe come for the delyvering of her, or any other escape made for her here in England, to the imminent dainger of the Quene my Mistris lyffe, that then this warrant to be delyvered to her counsall to give theme fre libertie to use there discretione, rather thene she should escape owt of prisone. Her Secretarye having yt in his possessione (with charge to kepe yt secret till she comandit the contrarye) (otherwise then her mynd or determinatione) showed this warrant to two or thrie of her counsall, which when they see, without more questions asking, called the whole counsall together, streight determyned her death, and sent present expeditione for the perfourmyng of yt, which was done (she protests to God) before she knewe of yt. Her Secretary is new in the Tower and will hardly escape her highe displeasure.

This was the some and effect of my message, which if I could declare unto your Majestie so well, and set yt downe so lyvely as I herd her speake yt with so heavy a harte, and so discontented a countenance, I thinke verely yow would rather pitie her unpleasant life (which ever sence she hath endured) then blame her for the facte, which she never consented unto.

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Elizabeth could scarcely expect to deceive James. The lady protested too much. She had already informed him that she intended to take his mother's life. While Gray and Melville were pleading for Mary, the English Queen had written pathetically to James about the extreme danger she had incurred through the (bogus) French plot, and had begged him to "reiect the care of murdar"; that is, to cease pleading for Mary. In another letter she had told him that his proposal to place Mary in the hand of a foreign prince was a frivolous suggestion. "If nide [need] wer not mor than my malice," she wrote, "she [Mary] shuld not have her merite"—if it were a matter of her own feelings and not a matter of necessity, Mary should not have what she deserved.¹ The meaning of these letters was quite clear in spite of the confused manner in which Elizabeth (probably deliberately) expressed herself, and she knew that James would not fail to detect their inconsistency with her later assurance that a "miserable accident" had befallen. But she hoped that James would be glad to avail himself of the pretext which she

¹ *Letters of Queen Elizabeth and James VI.*, ed. John Bruce (Camden Society), pp. 41-45.

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herself found so useful, and a long letter from Walsingham to Maitland, written on March 4th, was intended to make him realise the situation. It urged, with impeccable logic, that the real interest of the King of Scots could not lie in French and Spanish intrigues or in vengeance; if he feared that his efforts for his mother's life had already offended the English nobility and people, he was misjudging the nation—"as they were not ignorant what Nature might and ought to move his Highness unto, so long as there was any hope of her life, so they do not doubt but that Reason would induce him to leave sorrowing and thinking of her in due time."¹ Burghley, similarly, in a holograph letter to Archibald Douglas, preserved in the third volume of the *Warrender Papers*, expressed a hope that "your Kyng that hath lost his mother, who by nature was to dy befor hym, and can not be recovered, be not by passionat pleasyng men counselled to lose the harts of gret nombers lyvyng, that befor they dye, may will hym more good than his mothar's lyf cold have doone if she had contynued."

¹ *Spottiswoode*, Bk. VI. (edn. of 1677), pp. 358-363; *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 388-392.

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James had never hesitated about what constituted his interest, but the "due time" had not come, and in his curt answer to Elizabeth he allowed his natural feelings to have sway:—

"MADAME AND DEAREST SISTER,—Quhairas by your lettir and bearare, Robert Carey youre seruand and ambassadoure, ye purge youre self of yone unhappy fact. As, on the one pairt, considdering your rank and sex, consanguinitie and longe professed good will to the defunct, together with youre many and solemne attestations of youre innocentie, I darr not wronge you so farre as not to iudge honorable of youre unspotted pairt thairin, so, on the other syde, I uishe that youre honorable behauioure in all tymes heirafter may fully persuaide the quhole uorlde of the same. And, as for my pairt, I looke that ye will geue me at this tyme suche a full satisfaction, in all respectis, as sall be a meane to strenthin and unite this yle, establish and maintaine the treu religion, and obleig me to be, as of befoire I was, youre most louing."

Even in giving way to his desire to irritate and annoy Elizabeth, James had sufficient self-restraint to indicate that he expected, as a

¹ *Letters of Elizabeth and James VI.*, p. 46.

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reward for his acquiescence, a recognition of his claim to the succession—a satisfaction which would be the means of strengthening and uniting the island. A postscript was couched in more friendly terms. "This bearare hath sumquhat to informe you of in my name, quhom I neid not desyre you to credit, for ye know I loue him."¹

Such an acceptance of Elizabeth's explanation could not be regarded as satisfactory, and an outbreak of troubles on the Borders, unchecked and, possibly, encouraged by James, gave point to the tone of his communications with the English Queen and her ministers. Burghley wrote indignantly to Carey and to Hunsdon that James proposed "to suspend his former manner of intelligence [correspondence] until he may be better satisfied of her majesty's innocency." His language suggested that Elizabeth, "a Queen and a Prince sovereign," was on her trial. What further proof could he demand than the word of "a Christian Prince" and the punishment of her erring secretary?² James did want more proof. He demanded a recognition of his

¹ The bearer was Carey.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 393-400.

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claim, or at least a letter, signed by Elizabeth, acknowledging him as "lawful and nearest successor to the Crown, failing her bodily succession." Further, "to remove all kind of suspicion of her evil meaning, specially after the *infernal proceeding* against his dearest mother," it would only be right that she should give him "some lands in England, chiefly in the north parts, of ample and sufficient revenue, with the title of Duke."¹ This demand, made early in July, re-assured the English ministers about James's intentions, and diminished the importance of the expostulations against Elizabeth, which they knew him to be addressing to France and Spain, but, before the end of the month, they were again in doubt—not about the King's wishes, but about his ability to restrain the widespread indignation of his people.

The Scottish Parliament met that summer and, at the close of its session, on July 29th, Maitland, who had just been promoted to the Chancellorship, "made an oration in the presence of the Kinge and his nobilitie, towching a revenge for the death of the Quene, and then and there all the lordes (uppon their

¹ *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 267–268.

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knes) which weare there present, made a solemn voue, that they wold alweyes be readie to aide and assist hym, bothe with the hassard of landes, lives, and goodes, whensoever his Majestie sholde comawnde them in that action."¹ It was well known that some of the Scottish nobles had been urging James to go to war. Berwick was full of rumours of an invasion, and its custodians were making preparations for defence.² Hunsdon was convinced that James had "no good meaning" towards Elizabeth and that he was expecting troops from France or Spain—if the Queen trusted the fair words of the Scottish ambassador, she would be greatly deceived. Robert Bowes, the Treasurer of Berwick, who knew Scotland well, confirmed the alarming reports sent by the Governor; his friends in Edinburgh told him of "a straunge alteracion" in Scottish policy. In November, Hunsdon was certain about a Scottish understanding with Spain. James was to receive money, not troops, because the nobles were against the introduction of foreigners, but, when the money came, a

¹ *Border Papers*, I., No. 528. (Information received by an English agent at Berwick from Logan of Restalrig and communicated to Walsingham.)

² *Ibid.*, Nos. 540–555.

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Spanish landing in England would be accompanied by a Scottish invasion.¹

Meanwhile, the English ministers had been protesting against the speeches in the Scottish Parliament. Archibald Douglas gave explanations in London, a summary of Elizabeth's conversations with him was drawn up by Burghley, and James was reminded that an alliance with Spain would put an end to any hope of the succession. The English Privy Council expressed satisfaction with Douglas's assurances, so far as James himself was concerned, but insisted that Mary's execution was honourable and legal. The Scottish Justice Clerk, Sir Lewis Bellenden, defended Maitland as "a verie goode instrument in conserving the amitie of theire two crownes," and asked for a lenient construction of James's conduct. He had to show both his own people and all the world that he did not willingly acquiesce in his mother's execution.² James, in fact, was being as disagreeable to Elizabeth as he dared, and was hoping to frighten her, but he had no intention of carrying out the threats implied in the Parliamentary speeches or in his com-

¹ *Border Papers*, I., Nos. 556-557, 561, 563.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 496-502, 495, 491-494.

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munications with Spain. The alarm at Berwick subsided. Hunsdon, in December, did not despair of securing the friendship of James, so important "yn thys dangerus tyme." He believed that a letter from Elizabeth would be useful, but it must be sent through himself, for James would not yet openly avow the renewal of friendly correspondence with the English Queen; the letter should offer an increase of the pension paid under the provisions of the Anglo-Scottish League.¹

Then came another alarm. In January, Jane Kennedy, a member of a noble Scottish family, who had been one of Queen Mary's ladies-in-waiting and had attended her on the scaffold, came to Scotland from France.² James talked to her for two hours, was "very sade and pensyve all that daie, and would not supp that night." She told his courtiers "howe the Queene was martred and mangled" by the executioner, and described the scene with dramatic words and gestures. But James had assured Hunsdon that he would resist any Spanish landing in Scotland, and the Governor of Berwick urged that he could be secured

¹ *Border Papers*, I., Nos. 574, 578.

² A passport for her journey from England to France had been granted in August (*C. S. P.*, IX., p. 471).

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only by a liberal grant, which Elizabeth was unwise in delaying to offer.¹ Hunsdon was right. English and Scottish commissioners met and came to an agreement about the troubles on the Borders. In March, James wrote a friendly letter to Walsingham, and in April he crossed the Tweed and met Carey.² In May, Elizabeth, satisfied by the action taken by James on the Borders, where he destroyed a Catholic stronghold, wrote to express her willingness to drink "a large draught of the rivar of Lethe," and made a fresh avowal of her innocence. She called upon God, the searcher of hearts, to have mercy upon her soul as her innocency "in that mattar" deserved, a dangerous invocation, she truly added, for a guilty conscience.³ By June, James had resumed friendly correspondence, Carey was authorised to promise that he should receive "some public instrument," signed by all the English judges, "that such right as he may pretend can in no sort be weakened or prejudiced" by the sentence upon his mother.⁴

¹ *Border Papers*, I., Nos. 586-588.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 550, 557-558.

³ *Correspondence of Elizabeth and James VI*, p. 48.

⁴ *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 329-330. Hunsdon and Carey had convinced James that it would be unwise to press for a Dukedom. James had also asked that Davison be sent to

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In July, it was proposed to send a new ambassador, Sir Richard Wigmores, to Scotland. The first draft of his instructions avowed Elizabeth's responsibility for Mary's death ("it had been dangerous for the Queen to deny this request to her subjects"), made a clumsy attempt to reconcile this avowal with her explanation of her innocence, and urged that James was not bound in honour to avenge Mary's death. "If his fortune were to have soe wicked a mother, which he could not remedye, it was Godes judgement she should dye in that sorte, against the which he ought not to contende."¹ The actual instructions given to Wigmores were much more tactful, but the draft indicates English confidence in James's "digestion." In the end of July, James was informed of the approach of the Spanish Armada, and on August 1, he wrote to Elizabeth offering his person and his forces, promising to behave himself "not as a stranger and foreyne prince, bot as zour natural sone and conpatriot of your countrey in all respectis," and assuring her that the invaders would have to deal "not with England but Scotland, but Elizabeth would not do more than send an official report of his trial and sentence (*ibid.*, p. 330).

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 561-572.

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with the whole Ile of Britayne.”¹ An offer of a yearly pension of £5,000 reached James about the time he wrote this letter; and on August 6th, the English ambassador reported to Burghley that “there is no suspicion to be had of him.”² It is melancholy to learn that, after the danger from Spain was over, James regarded himself as cheated by the English and complained that Elizabeth “used him lyke a boy.”³ He had to wait many weary and impatient years for his reward.

The course of our narrative has made it clear that James deliberately refrained from adopting a policy which would have saved his mother's life at the cost of a grave risk to his own chance of the English succession. It remains only to indicate the later careers of his four ambassadors. Sir Robert Melville lived to extreme old age, was entrusted by James with the duties of Deputy Chancellor during the King's absence in Denmark on the occasion of his marriage, was again employed as an ambassador to England, became a Lord of

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., p. 588.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 589, 591. The ambassador was William Ashby. Wigmore got into trouble and was not sent, though he visited Scotland for private reasons (*ibid.*, p. 637).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 654-655.

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Session, and in 1616 was created Lord Melville of Monimail. Keith was knighted on his return from his embassy, was given another mission to Elizabeth, accompanied James to Denmark, became a Privy Councillor, and was sent to Flanders to invite the Estates of the Low Countries to be represented at the baptism of Prince Henry.¹ He died before July, 1601.¹ Gray's foreboding that the mission to England would be his “wrak” proved to be justified. In May, 1587, he was accused of various offences, and one of the charges was the result of Leicester's revelations (*cf. supra*, p. 154). The first accusation against him was “that he had writtin to the Quene of England aboute the moneth of August last bypast, without his Hienes knowledge or command, beiring in effect that, giff [if] the Quene of England culd not persave hir awin securitie untaking his Majesteis moderis lyff, QUIA MORTUI NON MORDENT, yet it wer nawayes meit that the same wer done oppinlie, bot rather be sum quietare meane.” The charge did not relate to the period of his embassy, but it was generally believed—apparently unjustly—that

¹ *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 476, 621, 629, 708; *Privy Council Register*, IV., pp. 260, 421, 430; V., p. 144; VI., p. 264.

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in England he had secretly advised Elizabeth to put Mary to death. Gray pleaded guilty.¹ His life was spared, but he was banished for a time. He soon returned and took some part in politics, but never regained his influence over James, though the King did not treat his later misdeeds with severity. He succeeded his father as 6th Lord Gray, in 1608, and died in 1611. The later career of Douglas is obscure. James nominally disavowed him as ambassador in March, 1587,² but, in spite of the revelations of his treachery made by his colleagues, continued to employ him unofficially for some considerable time.³ He does not seem to have returned to Scotland. References to him in the correspondence of the period show that he was dependent upon the English Court for his means of living.⁴ His Glasgow benefice brought him nothing,⁵ and he was ultimately deposed for non-residence. The date of his death is unknown.

¹ *Privy Council Register*, IV., pp. 166-169.

² *C. S. P.*, IX., pp. 332, 547-548.

³ James was employing him as late as 1596 (*Hatfield Papers*, XIII., p. 567).

⁴ In 1593 he begged Elizabeth for money having "been resident in England by the King of Scotland's command these six years and better, at his own charges" (*Hatfield Papers*, XIII., pp. 485-486).

⁵ *Hatfield Papers*, III., pp. 238, 241.

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